A MERCURY PUBLICATION

THE MAGAZINE OF Fantasy and Science Fiction

35 ¢ APRIL

No Man Pursueth

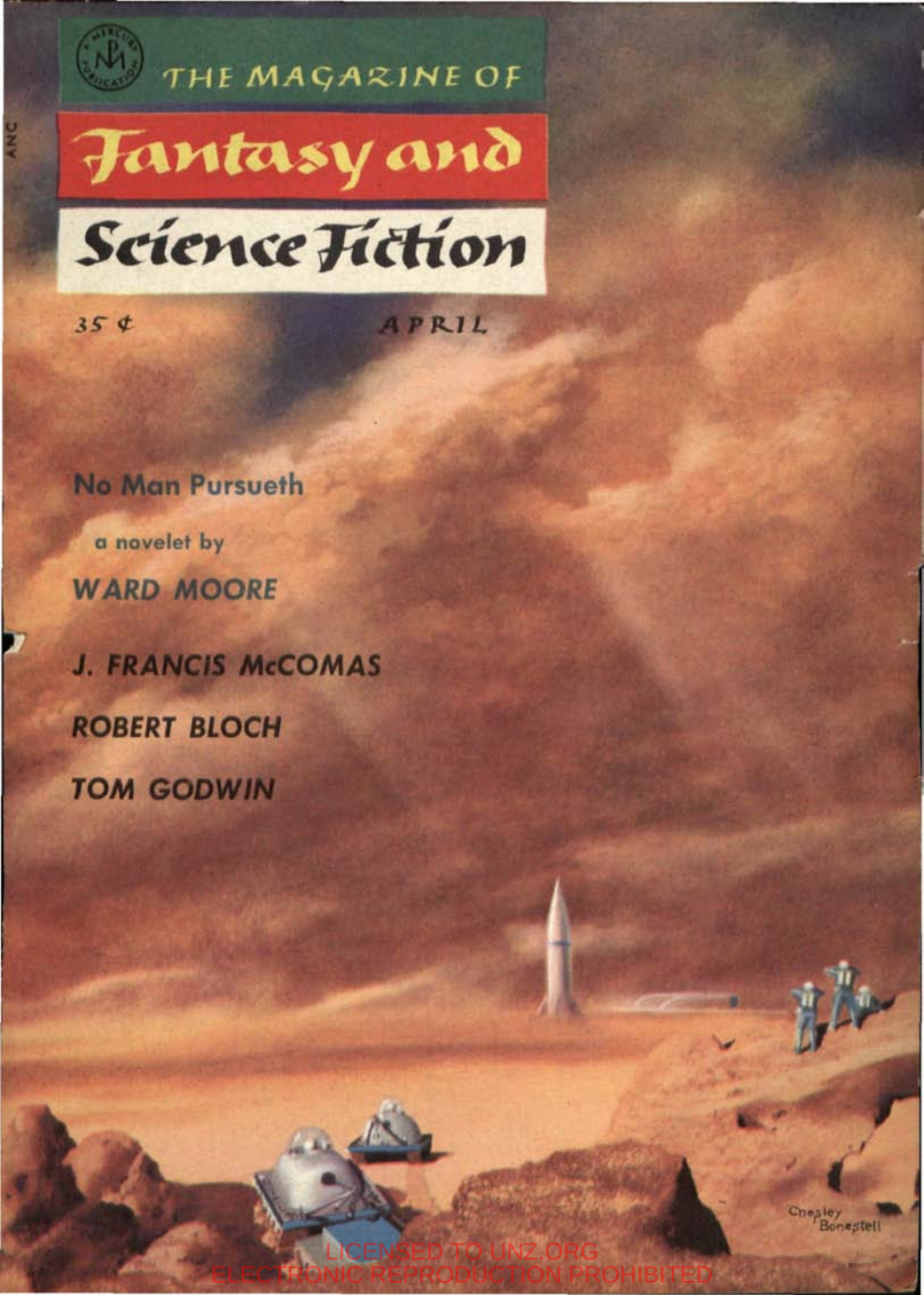
a novelet by

WARD MOORE

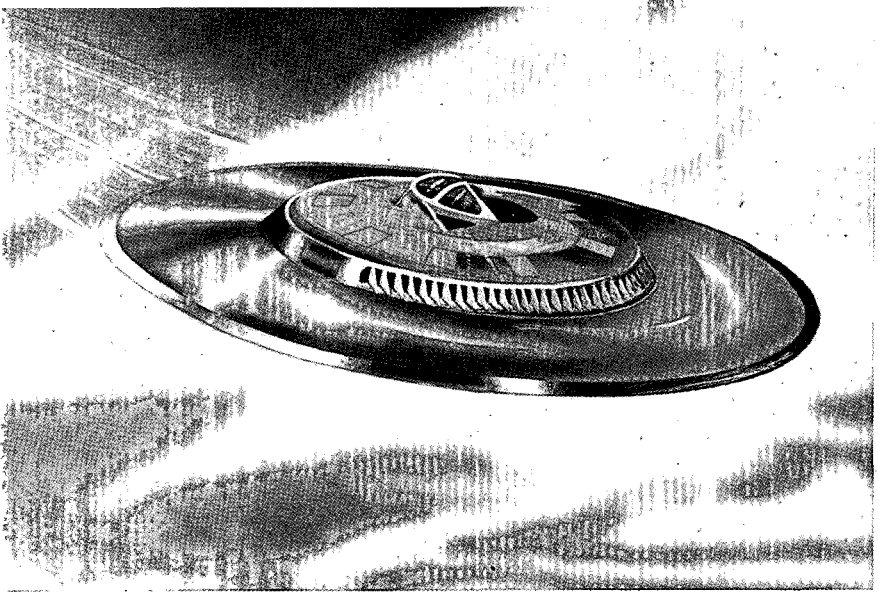
J. FRANCIS McCOMAS

ROBERT BLOCH

TOM GODWIN



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



*153435 A.C.

Artist's conception of a vertical rising, disc-shaped aircraft which could result from a project under development for the U. S. Air Force by AVRO, Ltd., Canada.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 25 OCTOBER 1955

OFFICIAL U. S. AIR FORCE PHOTO,
RELEASED BY DEPT. OF DEFENSE

see page 33

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy and Science Fiction

VOLUME 10, No. 4 APRIL

No Man Pursueth (*novelet*) *by* WARD MOORE 3
Unidentified Aerial Objects (*article*) *by* THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE 33
The Spaceman Cometh *by* HENRY GREGOR FELSEN 38
I Kiss Your Shadow *by* ROBERT BLOCH 47
The Motorman's Glove *by* ERIC ST. CLAIR 62
Operation Opera *by* TOM GODWIN 66
Recommended Reading (*a department*) *by* ANTHONY BOUCHER 76
Don't Fence Me In *by* RICHARD WILSON 81
Free Flight (*verse*) *by* P. M. HUBBARD 84
On Camera *by* JOHN NOVOTNY 85
Shock Treatment (*novelet*) *by* J. FRANCIS McCOMAS 99
The Incredulity of Colonel Mumph *by* CLAUD COCKBURN 124

"Coming Next Month" appears on page 98

COVER PAINTING BY CHESLEY BONESTELL

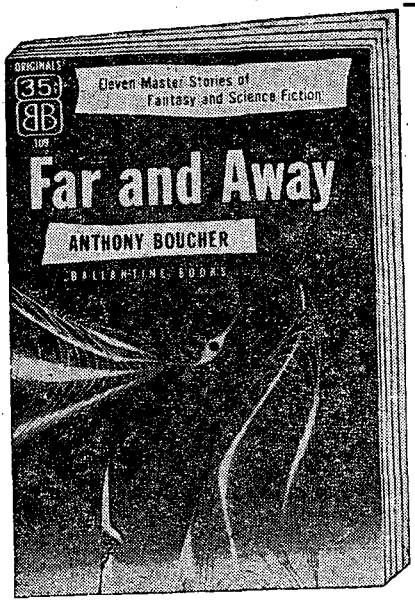
(*Dust storm on Mars. Painting from "The Exploration of Mars," by Werner von Braun, Willy Ley, and Chesley Bonestell. To be published soon by The Viking Press.*)

Joseph W. Ferman, PUBLISHER *Anthony Boucher*, EDITOR

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 10, No. 4, Whole No. 59, APRIL, 1956. Published monthly by Fantasy House, Inc., at 35¢ a copy. Annual subscription, $4.00 in U. S. and Possessions; $5.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. General offices: 471 Park Ave., New York 22, N. Y. Editorial office, 2643 Dana St., Berkeley 4, Calif. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Concord, N. H. under the Act of March 3, 1879. Printed in U. S. A. *© 1956 by Fantasy House, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Submission must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.*

J. Francis McComas, ADVISORY EDITOR; *Robert P. Mills*, MANAGING EDITOR; *George Salter*, ART EDITOR; *Howard K. Pruyn*, CIRCULATION MANAGER; *Charles Angoff*, ASSOCIATE EDITOR; *Gloria Levitas*, ASSISTANT EDITOR; *Constance Di Rienzo*, EDITORIAL SECRETARY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Let Us Give You ANTHONY BOUCHER'S Latest Book — "FAR AND AWAY" — FREE

with a subscription to The Magazine of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION. This outstanding collection of stories by Mr. Boucher, editor of F&SF, presents some of his finest work—11 glimpses into the whimsical, the grandiose, the startling worlds of science fiction and fantasy. Created by the urbane and sparkling imagination of one of science fiction's foremost exponents, these tales have won high praise from the most exacting critics.

Here is an unbeatable combination—designed to introduce new readers to the convenient F&SF habit of year-round entertainment. For just $4.00 you'll get the next twelve issues of this top-flight magazine PLUS your copy of the colorful, soft-cover edition of **FAR AND AWAY by Anthony Boucher.** We can make this offer for a limited time only, so fill out the coupon provided below and mail it—TODAY.

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

471 Park Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

Start my subscription with the next issue and send me my copy of FAR AND AWAY right away.

I enclose ☐ $4.00 for 1 year ☐ $7.00 for 2 years

NAME----------

ADDRESS----------

CITY----------STATE----------

F-A-6

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Conventionally a lead novelet carries a long introduction. But, still rapt in the spell of this tale of a charming actress and a warp in space-time, all I wish to say is that it stands beside the author's LOT *novelets and his novel* BRING THE JUBILEE *as one of the stories I have been most proud to publish.*

No Man Pursueth

by WARD MOORE

ONE OF THE MINOR SYMPTOMS Hesione noticed that Sunday morning was the way all the later editions of the papers were folded with the front pages outside, instead of the comic sections. FIVE MORE PLANES VANISH, said a conservative headline. AMNESIA VICTIMS' STORIES IN WEIRD COINCIDENCE, announced another. PRETTY GIRL AMNESIAC ATTACKED; INCOHERENT, proclaimed a tabloid. Hesione bought a *Herald Tribune* and discarded most of it on the stool beside her, keeping only the news and drama sections.

"Just a cup of coffee, please," she said to the clerk, smiling automatically at him as if he were in the audience — which of course potentially he was. "I'll decide after whether I'm hungry or not."

She did little more than glance through the article on the theater page headed, *Hesione Hadstone's "Lady Cicely" Still Fresh and Bright After 24 Weeks; Shaw's Brassbound Ideally Suited To Her Talents; Will Play Lady Macbeth Next Season.* She did not even read it through again, but turned back to the news as she sipped her second cup of coffee.

The five lost planes — a TWA between Chicago and Los Angeles, a Delta bound for Memphis, a B-51 taking off from La Guardia, and two small private planes, one in Vermont, the other in Ohio — made it 29 for the week and 81 since the disaster became epidemic. The CAA was still trying to make up its mind whether to order all planes grounded. Senators argued that Communist sabotage was responsible, in spite of last week's news, leaking through the Iron Curtain, of planes disappearing in the Soviet Union and China, just as all over the rest of the world. Neither meteorologists nor aeronautical engineers had satisfactory explanations to offer.

As for the amnesiacs, there was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still no connection established with the vanishing planes except the coincident number of cases which had begun to be heard of in the last month, at the same time the plane losses jumped. The newspapers called them amnesiacs, but as near as Hesione could make out, they were merely men and women — astonishingly, children also — who appeared to suffer peculiar hallucinations during some sort of blackout lasting for anything from a few minutes to several days. There was no apparent pattern in their experiences giving a clue to the cause. Drivers of cars turned up on roads they had never intended to take, often miles from prospective destinations. They had been driving along normally — all agreed on this — either fast or slowly according to inclination, when suddenly the familiar scene was replaced by an utterly strange one. Sometimes their cars were on no road at all, but bouncing over plowed fields or rocky riverbeds. Even when the tires remained on thoroughfares, they were no longer like those of the moment before. Concrete changed to blacktop or tarred sand, gravel, stone blocks or packed earth. Often the wayside signs were in strange languages.

The amnesiacs, seized by terror, babbled on their return of people in unusual costumes — "fancy dress" was the commonest phrase used in description, and often the only one in their stories that made sense — who were rarely friendly, more often hostile, and always unaccountable. The bewildered wanderers, fleeing their nightmare either in cars or on foot, suddenly found themselves back in the United States, dazedly begging help or explanation.

Others had similar experiences. Housewives, going from refrigerator to deep-freeze cabinet, stepped into unknown rooms or unaccustomed streets. A step or two might find them back in their own kitchen, convinced they had suffered a momentary delusion; sometimes they moved in alien surroundings for days before they walked back into the familiar, five or fifty or five hundred miles from home.

"Makes you wonder, huh, Miss Hadstone?"

Hesione started, then turned her you-are-one-of-my-public smile on the man reading the *Herald Tribune* over her shoulder. He was no one she knew, though he looked faintly like an unsuccessful agent, but for the last five years she had gotten used to being recognized by strangers. She nodded, not too encouragingly (seedy characters often tried to borrow money; men often thought actresses — stars or walk-ons — were easy pickups), but not too discouragingly either. He might not be a customer for Shaw or Shakespeare, but popularity never hurt anyone on the stage.

"And they're scared. Everyone's scared. Because they can't figure it out."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It's frightening," said Hesione simply.

"Only because no one knows what's happening," agreed the man, seating himself on the stool beside her and taking off his hat to show thin, muddy hair brushed in evenly spaced stripes over a glossy bald head. "Because they're unwilling to know."

"Unwilling?" Hesione inflected incredulously. "Surely everyone is frantic to find out."

"Are they?" he asked comfortably. "Yet when someone wants to tell them, they jeer."

Hesione raised her eyebrows.

"Peterberry," said the man, introducing himself, "Alonso Peterberry. Sometimes known as America's Number Three Science Fiction Fan."

"Oh," murmured Hesione, drawing back a little from contamination.

"Sure," confirmed Mr. Peterberry proudly. "I'll let Sam and" (could the word be *furry?*) "fight it out for first and second, but did either of them ever put out a zine like *Fan Dango?* Of course there was more egoboo in the old *Fantods* — that was *printed*, but I had to drop it for a spell of gafia. And it's the confensus of opinion that *Dango* tops anything else in" (did he say *fapper?*).

"Oh," repeated Hesione, hoping that the word might be common to her language and his.

"Well," said Mr. Peterberry, "I've sent the explanation to every prozine in the world and I bet they'll all print it. Even Gold and Boucher."

"That's very interesting, Mr. Peterberry," said Hesione, gathering up her *Herald Tribune* and reaching for her check.

"Well, don't you want to know about it?"

"Oh yes, but the truth is, I'm in a rush —"

"I'll condense it. The time-space continuum has been warped."

"I beg your pardon?"

He took a grimy envelope from his pocket, looked at it with a certain fresh curiosity, then tore it in half. With a pencil he drew a straight line across each of the halves. "One dimension," he explained. "A one-dimensional space continuum."

"I see," conceded Hesione, unseeing.

He stood one of the scraps of envelope upright so that the lines impinged perpendicularly on each other. "A one-dimensional space continuum warped," he instructed triumphantly.

"But . . ."

"Imagine four dimensions instead of one. Length, breadth, height and time. A *time*-space continuum. Do the same thing. That's what's happened. Plane — or car or man — going along this line —" he pointed a gnawed finger "— in our normal time-space continuum. He hits the point of fracture here. Suddenly he's in a different continuum. When he returns — if he does — he is no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

longer at the place of departure. Because the earth revolves (haven't checked fully, but so far there seem to be no cases of eastbound travelers) and time passes. Logical?"

"Yes," agreed Hesione, dazed. "But . . ."

"Now you want to know what caused the warp."

"Not at all. I mean, I—"

"All I can say is that it must be a tremendous force, like solar energy. Of a kind not known to physicists. Might account for some of the old miracles better than Velikovsky."

"I see."

"Comes from knowing s.f.," said Mr. Peterberry complacently. "Been a pleasure, Miss Hadstone."

She ordered a third cup of coffee and two eggs. She had slept wretchedly, overstimulated by the hysterical response of the Saturday night audience and preyed on by the pervasive fear everyone had felt increasingly for the past month. If she were not neurotic about it she would certainly have taken a sleeping pill, but ever since Catherine . . .

So this Sunday morning, instead of sleeping properly till noon and then reading Brooks Atkinson's wonderful piece about her while she breakfasted in bed, she had gotten up at the ungodly hour of 9 and gone to a drugstore counter for coffee. She had thought a walk in the spring air might refresh her; instead she had met Mr. Peterberry. Who only confused her more.

Should she go back to the hotel and have the car brought over for a drive out Long Island or up in Westchester? It might be better to take a walk after all — tire herself out. No show tonight; bed at 8 or 9 at the latest; sleep the clock around. Escape.

The street of brownstone houses converted into shops was so commonplace . . . too commonplace. Suppose she walked into . . . whatever the amnesiacs walked into? Mr. Peterberry's warped something-or-other. I'm 41 years old, she thought, and I'm scared. Wanting to cry, Mama, Mama. Sanctuary.

Silly, because sanctuary was for those who committed crimes and fled from vengeance to places of refuge. She had never done anything more heinous than drive 60 in a 30-mile zone. And she had paid the fine. I'm losing my mind.

Sanctuary was also converted brownstone, two of them this time, remodeled into the cool silence of the Church of the Former Rain, presumably with parsonage or synodal offices or welfare services — or all three — abovestairs. There were not more than a couple of dozen worshipers or idlers in the hard pews, gently sniffing the stale, old-linen-and-bleach smell. Someone was pummeling "Sheep May Safely Graze" on an untuned piano. Dear Johann Sebastian, thought Hesione, I bleed for you with every pounded key. Except for funerals I have not been in a house of worship twice in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

25 years; if I had to break my routine I could at least have chosen something Episcopalian or Congregational or Unitarian. Let me correct you, Mr. Peterberry: it is not time-space that has been warped. Just me.

"— sinners, all of us," shouted the man, his volume much too great for the room and the number of his listeners. Nor was he placing his voice properly. Hesione had a nebulous idea that ministers were taught such things as part of their training. Maybe only those of the more conventional sects; the creed of the brownstone faithful probably considered such preparations insincerity.

"— guilt, awful, unrepented guilt —"

Sex, thought Hesione, swiftly glancing back over a singularly blameless life. They're all mad on the subject except Shaw; if I could have played Lady Cicely 60 years ago . . .

"— good stands alone, but evil begets evil. Oh my friends, dear fellow sinners, I am a pitifully ignorant man with no pretensions to worldly learning. I know nothing of science; the jargon of physics or psychoanalysis is far over my head. But I know this, and I tell it to you so you may ponder it and heed: the catastrophes of the moment, the disasters and the fear of disasters which shake the world, and which men of science cannot explain, are the result of evil; of all the collective evil that has been done since Adam —"

I suppose they would all turn around and stare if I slipped out now. Think I was trying to evade the collection. Why did I come in? Oh yes; I was scared. . . .

"— like an iceberg, so deceptive, so majestic, so perilous, floating along apparently untroubled by the dashing waves, suddenly turning over and showing the hideous face of evil for all to see, generating a tremendous, unbelievable force. Oh my friends, I say to you, this is the world. The world of man, the world of sinners, the world of wickedness and guilt. It has been sailing along untroubled — seemingly untroubled — for century after century, but all the while the evil was accumulating, deed upon deed, sin upon sin, until at last in our day the weight has become too much to bear and the wicked world has turned turtle. What can right it again? Repentance, only repentance —"

Repent in dust and hydrogen. Guilt. The jargon of psychoanalysis wasn't over *her* head; practically all her friends had gone to the couch for absolution. Paul had for years — perhaps he was still going. She knew so little of Paul, even of what he felt and thought, yet their marriage was satisfactory to both of them; it had endured fifteen years on a basis of mutual respect. So unlike the first awful adventure with Maurice — she could not think of him as her husband and the father of her child

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

— which had ended only when Catherine had . . .

Maurice had been a truly wicked man — full of aggressions, the analysts would say. He had tried first to seduce her as he had Catherine; only when she had rebuffed him for months did he suggest marriage. And then, while she was still carrying Peggy, he had begun again with Catherine. Her own sister. And Catherine had taken too many sleeping pills. Even after twenty years the horror shook Hesione.

Whatever was being played on the piano was unfamiliar to her. At any rate, having less vitality than Bach, it was more readily murdered. The collection plate, like an ancient warmingpan without a lid, was thrust over her knees. She fumbled in her bag, dropped a dollar into the plate, and left.

Between the time Hesione met Mr. Peterberry and the time she left the Church of the Former Rain, a jet fighter disappeared near Denver, 33 amnesiacs walked into other worlds, and 52 came back from excursions which had lasted from a few seconds to several days. While she rode in a taxi to 57th Street, a stratocruiser vanished; while she heard a piano recital by Haydn, Schubert, Weber, Berlioz, Brahms and Ravel, four planes were lost, 41 amnesiacs went, and 38 returned.

As she reached her hotel another — But the anesthesia of repetition made the occurrences constantly less meaningful. It even dulled her fear into a fatalism; if there was a trapdoor to another space-time somewhere in the middle of the lobby, well, it was there.

Lila was waiting in her room. "Thought you might need me, Miss Zioney. Want I should run you bath?"

"Why are you so good to me, Lila? I didn't expect to see you till tomorrow afternoon. Yes, please. Did you order yourself something?"

Lila answered her questions consecutively as she moved toward the bathroom and Hesione sank gratefully into the long chair. "You pays me well and you ain't too hard to get along with. It don't hurt me none to come downtown and see what you need. No'm, I don't hold with devilin' room service soon's you back's turned."

When she came out of the bathroom Hesione said, "Well, devil up room service now, will you? And for goodness sake get something to eat along with your martinis. And something nice for me. A pot of coffee and . . . and a steak, I think, and a fattening dessert. And lay out my nightgown, will you? I'm going to sleep and sleep."

Lila, in the long chair, had nearly finished her third martini, and Hesione, in bed, was toying with her pastry, when the phone rang. Lila rose, but Hesione picked up the receiver. "Mrs. Drummond? I have a person-to-person call from San Fernando, California."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paul — since she was Miss Hadstone to everyone else in the world. Something was wrong — Peggy? Maybe Paul was just —

"Hello, Hezzy?"

"Paul! What is it? Peggy . . . ?"

"Yes, but she's all right now. Really, Hezzy."

"What happened?"

"Sleeping pills. Esther Daniels, her room —"

"Sleeping pills? Oh no, Paul."

"It could have been an accident. They don't know yet —"

"They? The *police?*"

"No, no. The doctors. She's at the Cedars. Completely out of danger. Believe me, Hezzy."

"Paul, does Esther Daniels know *why?*"

"Look, I tell you it may have been pure accident. Anyway, no. She hasn't the faintest idea what would have made Peggy do a thing like that. If she did. She called me right after she called the doctor. I got down to the Cedars ten minutes after they brought Peggy there."

"Thanks, Paul. Listen, I'm coming right home."

"Of course. Even if it was an accident she'll want you. And if it wasn't, she'll want you still more."

Hesione was faintly embarrassed at her husband's unaccustomed emotion. "I'll fly," she said. "Tonight."

"Yes. I'll meet you at Burbank and run you right out to the hospital. Gaetano can't squawk; Belle can carry on for a week."

"I'm sure Jules won't make any trouble; I'll call him right away. Did you see her?"

"Peggy? No. But the doctor assured me she was absolutely out of danger."

"All right. I'll wire what plane. See you in the morning."

"Goodnight then."

"Good — Oh Paul. I can't!"

"What? I don't understand. Hello? Hello!"

"Paul, I'm afraid. No, terrified. I can't get on a plane. Not since this thing — with all of them disappearing."

"Yes, yes. You're right. You mustn't. I forgot. Now look Hezzy, everything will be all right. I'll keep calling you, and as soon as Peggy's up to it you can call her. She's in room —"

"No, I'll come. I must come. Only not by air. I'll drive."

"But that's impossible. It takes so long."

"Not if Lila comes with me and we take turns. Will you help me drive to California, Lila? Peggy needs me." She looked across the room. Lila was methodically packing a suitcase.

"Ready when you are."

"I'll phone you in . . . say four hours. That'd be eight, your time."

"Fine. But —"

"Goodbye. I must hurry."

What could have made Puggy — in her stress she reverted to the old childish nickname she had used affectionately for her daughter until

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the girl had astonished her with raging tears, proclaiming she hated; hated, hated that awful name — what could have made Peggy do such a thing? Hesione, consciously loosening her grip on the wheel and then unconsciously tightening it, pressed just a little harder on the gas pedal. She was not — she took a small pride in never having been — a doting mother; she did not tell herself that Peggy was beautiful, popular, brilliant, talented, happy, with everything to live for. To Hesione's detached eye Peggy was homely — rather pleasantly and sometimes even charmingly homely — and inclined to shyness and moods. She didn't know if her daughter was popular; she suspected she wasn't — except perhaps equivocally, as the daughter of a well-known actress — and she doubted she had any particular talents. But still . . .

"Why would she do something like that?"

"Man," answered Lila succinctly. "Ain't none of them worth it, but women go right on bothering with them anyway. Want me to take over now?"

Hesione glanced at the clock. "I'll stop at the next town and phone Paul. Then we'll change. Men? I wouldn't think Peggy . . ." She wouldn't have thought Catherine was the type either. Peggy was the niece Catherine had not lived to see. What nonsense; heredity.

Suppose Peggy had become involved as Catherine had? Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for love. But women? She shrank a little in distaste; she was Lady Cicely for the fastidious moment, eternally vestal. But she was also Lady Macbeth: I know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me — though to be accurate Peggy had been on formula almost from the first. She must be getting groggy with tiredness and worry, she decided; phone . . .

It took so long to put the call through that, as she stood in the narrow booth, her knees trembled. Paul not home, called urgently to the hospital: Your stepdaughter, Mr. Drummond; perhaps you'd better — then suddenly Paul, "Hello? Hello?"

The connecton was bad, and the operator kept cutting in to ask for more quarters and dimes; she fumbled in her purse, listening to his encouragement; there was no use her calling the hospital; tomorrow. Peggy was much improved; don't wear yourself out, Hezzy. . . .

She slipped off her shoes and lay down on the back seat; Lila tucked the robe around her. Last night . . . last night was so far away. In Act One she played one of a trio with Captain Brassbound and Sir Howard; it wasn't until Act Two that she got the long solo passages, and Act Three with its duets (Granville Barker said you were supposed to play Shaw like opera, pausing after each speech as though expect-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing an ovation for an aria). She had been so overstimulated after the curtain she couldn't sleep; now she couldn't sleep either.

"Lila?"

"Yes, Miss Zioney?"

"If I'd brought her East with me . . . But there seemed so many good reasons — I don't know. I asked her if she wanted to come. Talked it over carefully. It would have meant trying to make new friends, and Peggy — Besides, she didn't seem to mind."

"She twenty, ain't she?"

"Yes. Almost twenty-one."

"You was twenty, did you expect you mamma to tell you what to do and what not?"

"Mother was dead; there was only my older sister Catherine and me. Besides, I was married at nineteen."

"See what I mean?"

"I'm not sure. You mean I have no more responsibility for Peggy after a certain age?"

"Something like that. You does you job when they young, and that's all you can. Try to sleep now, so's you can drive come morning."

Do your job when they're young, thought Hesione; I did. Puggy had everything. From pediatricians to progressive schooling. And it wasn't always easy, what with Maurice at the beginning, and working at the Pasadena Playhouse afterward; and then just working. And Paul wasn't making any money when we got married. I remember how I hesitated, wondering if it was fair to her. But just when does the time come when you are no longer responsible?

"'I've had enough of your duty and Howard's duty,'" she murmured.

"What's that, Miss Zioney?"

"What? Oh. Nothing; from Act Three."

"You better go to sleep."

"Uh-huh."

Should she have taken the plane after all, in spite of her terror? Suppose Peggy . . . Suppose she . . . got *worse*? Whatever the cause of her despondency (here Hesione brushed aside the consciousness she was accepting the theory there had been no accident), news that her mother's plane had vanished would hardly lighten it. Duty? Actually, Lady Cicely was more duty-ridden than the other two; her duties were diffused where theirs were concentrated and poisonously ingrown. Everybody in the play lied to themselves; Cicely was a hateful, hard, cold, superficial bitch over whom Shaw had thrown a veil of sparkling words and generations of hardworking actresses had lent an appeal not inherent. The infantile or self-starting school of acting: identify yourself with the part. Thank heaven, next year she would play a real woman, Lady Macbeth. . . . I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis . . .

She woke with a start, moaning; wretched, chilled, with a cramp in her neck and a drugged desire for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more sleep, much more sleep. She drew her knees closer, struggling to compress her body still further into the fetal position and plunge back into unconsciousness through sheer will.

"Zanesville, Uhia," announced Lila. "You rested some?"

Hesione groaned. "I'll never be rested again."

"Breakfast'll fix you up."

Hesione shuddered. "Food — uh! But I'll call Paul — No, what time is it? Five — too early. I'll call the hospital, though."

"And we need gas. And you going to have at least a cup of coffee."

"All right. See if you can find a filling station with a lunch counter." She sat up and yawned. "I feel like a scarecrow. Last year's scarecrow."

"You feel better directly. How's that place look?" Without waiting for an answer, Lila drove up to the gas pump of an all-night lunchroom with a winking pink neon: TRUCKERS WELCOME. Hesione found her shoes, slipped on her coat, before opening the door to the chilly air. She hesitated when no attendant appeared, then shrugged. In the rest room she bathed her eyes and face in cold water, refusing to look at the grime; she'd been in dressing rooms where it was worse.

"We'll go to the counter and order, then I'll telephone." She heard selfconsciousness in her voice and glanced quickly at Lila to see if she had noticed it. But people in small restaurants, particularly those in little towns, were sometimes rude to colored people. If Lila went in alone they might ignore her or even refuse to serve her.

A knobbly faced man leaned across the counter's varicose linoleum, chewing gum just briskly enough to show glimpses of a flashing gold tooth. "Can someone put gas and oil in our car while we eat?" Hesione asked, disliking him at sight.

He looked at her with tepidly lustful appraisal. "Yup. Looie — Looie! Customer." He looked at her again, and she thought his leer faded, not from lack of interest but from lack of energy. "What'll it be?"

"Lila?"

"I could go for a steak, kind of rare; french fries and coffee."

"Just coffee for me," said Hesione.

"Just coffee?" asked the counterman with lazy insolence.

"Two coffees, a rare steak and french fried potatoes."

"No steak. Got hamburger, though."

The counterman's double — except that he wore greasy coveralls and a cap — slouched in. "Ya want gas and oil?"

"Please. Fill it with ethyl and check the oil. Have you a phone here?"

"Booth's outside."

"Can you let me have five dollars' worth of quarters, please?"

She shivered in the phone booth,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so tidily steel, glass, and mass-produced in the midst of the casual filling station. While she was confessing to the long distance operator she didn't know the number of the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital, Looie appeared with the oilstick held delicately between fingertips to show it was down a quart. She nodded quickly, nervously, apprehensive lest she be involved in explaining what brand and gravity of oil she wanted just as her connection went through.

"Hello? Yes. This is Mrs. Drummond. Hesione Hadstone. My daughter, Peggy Mallest — can you tell me how she is? Yes, I'll wait, of course." To Looie, still standing there, she said, "Thirty weight. Any good Pennsylvania."

Hospital routine wormed its way through the operator's demands for more quarters. Finally Hesione was told — reluctantly, she thought — that Peggy was sleeping normally; if Mrs. Drummond wanted more specific information it might be advisable to call Dr. Pletzel about eleven in the morning. "But —" she began, and then, faced by the hopelessness of it all, listened resignedly to the click of the broken connection and the operator's cheerfully aloof inquiry.

She started for the counter and her coffee, then thinking of the steamy, sweetish grease rising in the humid room, her stomach turned. A radio came to life with too much volume! " . . . definite grounding of all planes unless . . ." then a kindly hand turned it low again. She stared at a billboard advertising cigarettes, its colors faded and beaten by the spring rains and winds. Neither the sign nor its message had any interest for her, yet its heroic images and lifelessness were a soothing contrast to the humanity of the lunchroom. She sighed, taking a step forward. Loose gravel crunched under her shoes. She stumbled, regaining her balance swiftly and knew, even before she felt the strange texture through the thin soles, that she was no longer in the vicinity of Zanesville, Ohio.

Incongruously, her first thought was that now Lila would have to pay for her breakfast and the gas and oil. It was only after she suffered sympathetically the uneasiness turning to anxiety and then horror that Lila would feel and her frantic searching and calling, that she felt the force of the shock. I've done it, I've stepped through the time-space fracture or whatever it is. I'm lost.

Paul . . . ? Peggy . . . ? She must get back. She must. Right away. (Many had; she was sure some of them had been gone only seconds.) If she stood very still and considered. (There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.) Just one step — one single step — was all she had taken. Surely it was retraceable. It had to be. Surely . . . Slowly, very carefully, moving the heel delicately, into the precise

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spot it had occupied only the moment before. Perhaps? Oh, *please* . . .

The step breathlessly taken, she was still . . . It hadn't worked. Unreasonably it hadn't worked. What would? Something — something must. How did you get back. Because she had to. She *had* to. Run? Run, run. Run anywhere — anywhere. Run in a straight line (a straight line on a crumpled envelope), and somewhere, somehow, she would break out, back into reality.

It had been night when she left the phone booth; now it was gray-skyed day. Not only the place but the time — as though to make it finally impossible to get back. But it wasn't impossible. Others had gotten back. Accidentally of course; well, the accident would have to happen to her too. Running couldn't help; probably nothing she did deliberately could help.

The rows of identical buildings looked faintly familiar. Not as some particular place, but representative . . . Barracks? What was that factory over there, with those chimneys? (Although it didn't look like a factory she had ever seen, but a factory whose picture she had looked at. Why should she look at the picture of a factory?) And the high, barbed-wire fences?

"What are you doing here? Don't you know it is forbidden?"

She faced him in panic, his tight features blurring in her staring eyes. His black uniform — black? Who wore black uniforms? — jaunty, yet somehow wilted. His pale eyes searched her face, lipless mouth pressed hard upon itself. Most frightening of all to Hesione was the realization that though she knew no more than a few words of his language, yet she understood everything he was saying perfectly, even when he used colloquialisms. It gave her the powerless sense of being hypnotized.

"Answer please, Miss. No one has business here."

She shook her head numbly. The man came close, eyes still probing. She felt the warmth of his breath in loathsome intimacy. He grasped her wrist and turned back her sleeve to the elbow, scrutinizing the skin of her forearm. Satisfied, he let it fall.

"Your pardon, gracious lady, but these brutes are always up to tricks. Of course I can see you are of good blood but — Well, we have to be on our guard; they are like apes. Excuse me. Zimmer; Underofficer Zimmer, at your service. You are perhaps of the theatrical company from Dresden? The *Merry Widow* company?"

Hesione made a hoarse, croaking noise in her throat. She understood every word he was saying, every reference he made as soon as it was spoken. (She knew about the *Merry Widow* company from Dresden the moment he mentioned it; even hazily visualized the tenor and basso; their names were just barely beyond her recall). But if she spoke, it would be in English, to betray her-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self. She nodded; pointed to her throat.

"Oho. A touch of laryngitis perhaps. A thousand pities. But you should be in your quarters, resting, for tonight's performance. Why did you leave them, and how did you get here? No, no — don't try to answer and perhaps strain your throat. Forgive me. Allow me the great honor of escorting you back. What an interesting costume you are wearing. Perhaps it is a new French style? It is interesting, don't you think, how the French have sloughed off so much of their decadence since our Leader's victory? Perhaps you have played for the troops on the Western Front, or the occupation forces? Those lucky fellows, not to be stuck in a hole like this, herding the subhuman brutes. None visible at the moment, thank God; we've just shipped out today's batch — destination unknown."

Underofficer Zimmer laughed and paused in his garrulity to offer his arm, but not with such complete assurance that she was unable to pretend not to see it. I must break away, she told herself in frozen despair. Every moment I'm with him makes discovery more certain. And then what? Where can I run in this awful place?

"You see that building over there? That's where we dispose of the trash. A thousand a day, but this is only a beginning, you understand; we get more efficient with practice. And our great scientific advances. Eventually the whole problem which has baffled the realm for centuries will be solved through the application of science and the genius of our Leader. You must be proud, gracious miss, to be contributing to this great work of purification by entertaining the Leader's troops. However I can see you are; I know something of race and racial traits; there is a valkyrie touch in your walk and look. Do not think me impertinent, please. We are superior creatures because we speak out the truth boldly and without shame."

Save me, Hesione begged of no one. Save me.

"Yes, without shame; our ordeal as a folk has cleansed us of hypocrisy. Naturally there are still some immature individuals who have not yet learned the logic of destiny. This is probably why our work is not publicized. A mistake in my opinion; I would rub their noses in reality, like a puppy one teaches to understand. Not that I'm criticizing my superiors. Just anticipating. I hope I'm not boring you, gracious miss? But how could one of good racial stock be bored by anything having to do with race-healthiness? Even to think it would be unbecoming."

Hesione willed herself to scream, to end it all. She opened her mouth, but only a faint hiss came forth.

"No, no, dear lady, do not strain your throat, I beg. Do try a warm aspirin gargle and keep your neck well covered. The health of all folk-colleagues is a most precious asset

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the realm and must be guarded zealously. Hrrrrmph. Well, let us talk of lighter things — did you notice the flowerbeds by the main gate? Charming. Scientifically designed to produce lovely blooms from frost to frost. Beauty is science and science beauty. Speaking of science again, take note of those piles over there. You know these brutes have actually been wearing clothes of excellent quality while racially pure folk have been swindled by them into buying shoddy materials. Well, we get them all back here. See how neatly they are arranged according to size. And the shoes — men's here, women's there, and that fine large assortment of children's shoes: every size down to the smallest infant's —"

This time the scream came out, loud and shrill and uncontrollable. Hesione ran blindly, screaming, screaming. Faintly she heard Underofficer Zimmer's surprised expostulations; she had the feeling that someone — not Zimmer; no, Zimmer was left far behind — was calling on her to halt. Halt! Passage was forbidden. Then the sound of a shot, and shouting, angry words.

She ran through a gate miraculously open, turned a corner without quite realizing how or why, raced between windowless buildings. She knew her flight to be pointless; no escape from this place could be possible. The only atonment for even having seen it, breathed its air, been touched by its miasma, was to die in it. Let them catch, question, torture and kill her as quickly as possible.

Yet she ran on.

Jake Cooperman had told her once that some celebrants added to the Passover service a prayer or lamentation of remembrance for the six million martyrs. It had seemed to her at the time that this was an unfortunate thing, this keeping of bitter memories alive, an unforgiving thing. Now, running still, gasping, she wondered exactly how one went about forgiving the neat pile of children's shoes. . . .

A man in a steel helmet, grinning, suddenly stood before her, the rifle in his hands pointing, deadly. She screamed once more, effortlessly, uglily. She turned, tripped, fell. Fell, still screaming.

Fortunately for the easing of her hysteria, the darkness into which she fell, as soon as she got used to it, was only comparative; there was a moon and stars. The air was cold, bitingly cold, sawing at her lungs. Scattered trees loomed before her; the ground was rough. Not far off the shoulder of a mountain blotted out the stars. Wherever she was, she was sure it was nowhere near in either time or place to the horror she had just left. Shuddering, she tried not to remember it. . . .

She had no idea of direction. The Big Dipper was to her right; she decided to walk west, the way she was headed, which seemed to be downhill as well. Without evidence,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she was nevertheless sure she was back in the world she had stepped out of a few hours — or was it only a few minutes? — earlier. Though certainly this hilly country was not the flat Ohio where she had phoned —

Peggy! Perhaps days had passed and she . . . Oh, God, what had she done to be punished like this? She was immediately ashamed of the false drama, but her panic was real enough. Part of her mind told her she had escaped from the unspeakable, a miracle had rescued her; but she knew this to be an illusion. She had gotten away, but the place still existed; she was still trapped and would always be tied to it.

I should be thankful, she told herself; I should be grateful. (Lord, I believe, help Thou me.) If only I'd been brought back to some less lonely, less forbidding spot. I don't ask for the car and Lila; just somewhere where there are people and houses and telephones and warmth. "Help!" she cried aloud, but the sound was weak and unconvincing, embarrassed.

A tangle of thorns snagged her clothes and scratched her hands. A dog barked sharply somewhere to her right; questioningly, then in an angry paroxysm of short yaps. She had a vision of a snarling beast knocking her down and tearing at her throat. "If I were only the crying type," she whispered. "If I were only the crying type."

Numb with fear and cold she walked fatalistically toward the sound of the barking. "Help me, I'm lost," she called tentatively, and then monotonously, because it was easier to keep on than to stop, and somehow soothing to indulge the rhythmic repetition, "Help me, I'm lost; help me, I'm lost."

The barking became frantic as a dull spot of yellow light flickered ahead. "Who's there? I said, who's there?"

"Help me, I'm lost."

"Down, Billy; down! They anyone with you, Missus?" The dog's noise choked to a surge of welling growls.

"No. No one. Can you please help me to get to a telephone?"

"Telephone? One at Wilson's store — You a foreigner?"

"No, of course n — Oh, you mean, do I come from around here? No, I don't. I . . ." She felt helpless to explain herself to his suspicious caution. Undoubtedly he had never heard of the amnesiacs; to ask reasonably, "Where am I?" would more likely bring hostility than answer. "Please, I'm cold. Could I come in and get warm?" she asked meekly.

The Mackenzie kitchen, to which she was at length reluctantly admitted, was heavy with the rancid smell of stale pork fat. Its plastered walls, originally yellow or perhaps pale brown, were dark with a greasy sheen. On one was a picture of President Coolidge. Hesione had a sinking moment of fear that she had returned to the Nineteen Twenties,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but the calendar close by the taciturn Vermonter reassured her; it was for the current year. It was also with the compliments of Fisher's Hay, Feed & Grain, Hazard Ky.

She had no idea of the distance from Zanesville Ohio to Hazard Kentucky, or for that matter whether the Mackenzies were a mile or 50 from Hazard, but it certainly must be greater than the short space she had walked and run since she had left the phone booth. Had she covered ground while unconscious? Or was there some simple explanation for the discrepancy? Science fiction's number three fan had talked of the earth's revolution and the passage of time, but did this work out quite right? He probably had a pat answer. Compared to the Mackenzies, Mr. Peterberry would have appeared comforting and homey.

The Mackenzies had no TV or radio — no electricity — and didn't read newspapers. ("The Word's sufficient for us," said Mr. Mackenzie, looking uncompromisingly over white-stubbled cheeks, while Mrs. Mackenzie nodded stringy gray hair until her large belly wobbled. "Sin enough in the world, without reading about it.")

"How far is it to the telephone?" she asked. "I'd gladly pay you to take me there." She touched the soft leather of her shoulderbag, reassured. Suppose she had dropped it somewhere?

"Who do you want to telephone?"

Hesione's first resentment was swept away in panic. If I start explaining, I'm done for, she thought. Maybe the Mackenzies don't hang witches, but they certainly won't do anything to aid one. "My daughter is very ill and I must reach her. Please help me."

Mr. Mackenzie grunted. "All help is from the Lord," he said at length. "Anyway, it'll be light soon."

"All right," said Hesione, defeated. "I'll walk. How far is it?"

"Maybe two miles across ground; good five by road."

Two miles in the unmarked night, stumbling for lost paths, bayed at by dogs — it was impossible. Well, five miles on a strange road . . . I'm being punished, she thought; the Mackenzies and that non-union preacher; my sins pursue me. What have I done? I did not allow Maurice to seduce me; I came to my marriage bed undeflowered. I've never had an affair. I'm not taking credit for it; I was never really — not *really*, even in the case of Nick — tempted. I don't believe I'm a frigid woman; I've never felt reluctant when Paul (but nowadays we're so little together), in fact I've often been quite glad; it seems so *right* when you're as fond of someone as I am of Paul. I just don't have those uncontrollable appetites. Or at least I'm not uncontrolled by them. Lady Cicely.

Yet I do feel I'm being punished, and not unjustly. Freud set himself out to exorcise guilt-feelings, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perhaps guilt-feelings serve some necessary purpose. Oh God, I'm guilty of whatever You like, but please get me to a phone so I can call Peggy and Lila and Paul.

"Well, Missus, I suppose it'd be only Christian charity to haul you to Wilson's if you're of a mind to pay for the gas. About five dollars'd be right, I guess."

"Oh thank you, Mr. Mackenzie. Thank you."

He tramped out of the kitchen, heavy-footed with righteousness. Mrs. Mackenzie asked, "How many children you got?"

"One." The answer that was no answer. (Why don't you get rid of it? Maurice had demanded over and over. Ruin your figure. What do you think you'll look like by the time you're seven months along? And she might have, if it hadn't been for those two girls in the newspaper stories; septicemia; I was afraid to die. Oh, Peggy!) Maurice hadn't wanted children at all; by the time she married Paul they would have drastically interfered with her life. Had she wanted them? Hesione Hadstone will now answer the sixty-four dollar question while balancing on a slack wire two hundred feet above the heads of the audience without a safety net below.

Mrs. Mackenzie clucked and then said complacently, "Had sixteen myself before I got beyond it. Nine livin'."

The quantitative answer was no answer either; was Mrs. Mackenzie's moral quotient sixteen, or even nine times greater than Hesione's? Doubtless Mr. Mackenzie never suggested abortion, but she had heard and read dark stories of infanticide among the most God-fearing mountain folk —

She stopped her thoughts cold, sickened and ashamed. Mr. Mackenzie, in bleach-spotted, thready blue denims, gave a little nod that was half a bow signifying he was at her service and half a peremptory command to follow him outside. "Might's well come along for the ride, Mother," he said to his wife.

On the back seat of a shivering Model A, a folded blanket had adapted so successfully to the shape of the broken springs that it had long since worked itself into uselessness. The daylight was almost full, revealing the long-weathered, never-painted, sagging, shamed-looking house, the rock-strewn yard, and inadequate barn. Why shouldn't they want five dollars to take her five miles, Hesione asked herself; they needed it and she didn't.

Wilson's store, after miles of road such as she had believed no longer existed except possibly in the less traveled parts of Central America, was exactly what could have been predicated from the Mackenzie home. Hesione was enjoined to smoke or chew George Washington, to take Carter's Little Pills, to use Ivory. Evidently Mr. Wilson did not consider business hours im-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mutable; he showed no resentment at being summoned to open his doors at sunrise so she could use his telephone. He and the Mackenzies showed an appreciative and critical interest in Hesione's call, standing in a close semicircle as though to substitute for the nonexistent booth, politely staying just clear of the swing of her elbow as she deposited coins.

"California," commented Mr. Wilson. "Recollect Marthabelle Mimms? *She* went to California, ten, twelve years back. Turned out bad."

Miss Mallest was still sleeping normally; if she would call Dr. Pletzel at 11 . . .

"Even showing them in the schools," said Mrs. Mackenzie. "Giving innocent children ideas."

She resisted the temptation to call Paul; there was no point in disturbing him, he could tell her no more than the hospital had. The self-denial created a feeling of apprehension: suppose they *had* told him something they kept from her? Holding down her uneasiness, she began struggling with the adamant politeness of operators and supervisors to get through to Lila at a lunchroom and service station on the outskirts of Zanesville.

No, unfortunately she didn't have the name of the business or of the proprietor. It was a small place on the highway, west of the city and —

"I am sorry, I have no way of . . ."

But this was vitally important, Hesione insisted; she was trying to get to her daughter who was in serious —

"I am sorry, I . . ."

What about the numbers of all lunchrooms on the highway west of —

"I am sorry, I have no listing . . ."

She understood, but couldn't the supervisor consult the yellow pages as subscribers were urged to do? She knew the futility of allowing the slightest edge in her voice, but it was hard to be calm and patient. She tried to visualize the girl or woman behind the trained voice, to put the appropriate persuasiveness in her own as she tried another suggestion.

Forty minutes later she was finally talking to Lila. Her audience offered advice freely on possible routes, disagreeing amiably, but Hesione had the feeling their geography was even shakier than hers or Lila's. "It's not but twenty miles to 119," Mr. Wilson said.

"County road closer," grunted Mr. Mackenzie.

Lila said, "You hold on, Miss Zioney. I'll find out from the station man."

It was almost 300 miles, which meant nearly a full day's driving. "Be careful, Lila," she implored. "Oh, for heaven's sake, do be careful."

"Near as I can make out, being careful don't count one way or the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other. If you going to get youself lost, it just happens, that's all. But don't you worry; nothing's going to happen to me. They got a hotel round there you can get some sleep?"

She turned to query them. No, there was nothing like that short of Hazard, but Miz Wilson might let her use the spare room and take dinner with them if she wasn't too choosey.

Hesione had tried to sleep (Oh Catherine; Oh Peggy), but Mrs. Wilson's tiptoed entrances were dramatically responsive to her open eyes; helpfully ("Don't suppose you're used to a bed like this, or these oldtime goosedown comforters. Maybe you'd like some coffee or a snack now? We got some real fancy canned stuff in the store they're too ignorant around here to buy"), or conversationally ("It must be a real soft life. Being an actress, I mean; sleeping all day and showing yourself all dressed up on the stage only maybe two, three hours a night, speaking just what's wrote down for you. Always thought I ought to have been one myself; everybody says my figure isn't bad; when I was a kid I was always in the school play"). And although she was amused at Mr. Wilson blundering in with wide eyes and apologies implying a regular custom of visiting the spare room, his arrivals and exits had not helped her relax.

In the afternoon she bathed her eyes and tried the telephone again. Dr. Pletzel's authoritative assurance was chastening, as though she had dared to doubt, hysterically and impiously, that all was well as soon as the doctor had been called. Paul's calm, friendly voice provided a different kind of relief, as he begged her to take it easy, now that Peggy was all right. She was a very lucky woman, she told herself, to have Paul, so understanding and reliable, so — so unimpetuous and undemanding. Maurice would have been unstrung and frenzied, blaming it all on her. But then Maurice would never have been separated from her by 3000 miles; could never have been persuaded to accept a reasonable, expedient arrangement if it interfered with his appetites or needs.

She had set a time for Lila's coming and then added an hour to it, to discount her eagerness. She tried not to stare down the road, straining to see in each sluggish car the familiar lines of her own. And then, when she was sickeningly sure disaster had struck, Lila was there. "Oh *dar*ling," Hesione cried. "Oh darling, darling." And Lila patted her over and over. "It's all right, Miss Zioney. It's all right." And she had been so thankful to pay the Wilsons and go.

She drove most of the night in spite of her tiredness, glad to be racing away from all that had happened, racing toward Peggy. They crossed the river at Cairo and Lila

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took over again while Hesione slept in the back seat, really slept this time, deeply and darkly, dreaming that Maurice kept the Wilsons' store and refused to let her telephone. She drove all day through cornfields and flat lands, through dusty pastures and rows of slack barbed wire seemingly designed to protect nothing. Then Lila took over again, and night fell, and she was sleepless once more. "I wish there was a moon," she was saying, when Lila, clutching the wheel as though fighting a blown tire, exclaimed, "Something's wrong. Something's real wrong."

Hesione knew it, herself, for the car lurched and seemed to drop a foot or two; when the wheels resumed their interrupted traction, what she felt through the springs and shock absorbers was not the smooth concrete on which they had been riding, but the jarring impact of cobblestones, worn round and disparate.

Her first thought was, Why did it have to happen to me *again*? Once ought to be enough; you'd think you'd build up an immunity or something. Like smallpox. Surely she had never heard of another victim repeating. If it were punishment and not just blind chance, wouldn't you think — Suppose it was neither punishment nor chance, but something else? A warning? A first and second warning? Why? Her mind was scrabbling around in absurdities.

Maybe you didn't get the opportunity to return if you fell through a second time?

Lost forever?

"You all right? I mean —"

"I — I'm all right, Lila."

Lila cut the motor and turned off the lights. A full moon shone in the sky where no moon had been. Hesione could see rooftops, and there were murmuring city noises drifting in. Oh, why . . . ?

"This what happen to you before, Miss Zioney?"

"I'm pretty sure. Oh Lila, what will we do? What will we do now?" She realized she was whispering, afraid speaking aloud would bring down new misfortunes.

Lila sighed deeply. "Well, you come out of it once. So they's ways. I read every day about people getting back."

"Maybe they don't tell us about the others. Oh . . . Aren't you afraid?"

"Me? Scared stiff. We get to California, I'm going to sit and just shake for a week. Right now I got no time. We got to figure what to do. Back the car real slow?"

"I don't think that helps; I tried walking backward, before. These fractures or holes — whatever it is people are falling through — must move. A man told me something about the world moving and time passing; the hole that was in one place a second ago may be miles away by now. We got in by accident; it'll be accident if we get out."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We'll get out — don't you doubt it. Meantime, we can't just set here. Where we, anyhow?"

Where? Another Shaw play,— the unfrocked priest: In hell. Dramatic. Weren't people always complaining about actors being more stagey offstage than on? "I — About fifty years back or so, I think. I don't know. These cobblestones. Maybe more. Or in some place where — What's that?"

"Just a cat, Miss Zioney. Don't be so jumpy. On the fence over there."

Hesione peered out. They were in a narrow street. No, an alley, probably; it was hard to tell, despite the moonlight, since there was no accustomed frame of reference. Behind the fences were lighted house windows, but the lights had a yellow quality to which she was unused; gas or oil lamps. Her first experience had taken her about fifteen years into the past; this one must be much earlier. Did that mean —

The cat's crooning moans turned in a searing second into shrieks of pain.

"Lila! What happened?"

A light gradually glowed into full illumination of the large window opposite. A big head, cigar-stub clamped between teeth set in a squarecut gray beard peered out. "Got him!"

A less imposing face peered alongside. "Perfect shot, Hannes. Haul in your prize."

Hannes grunted. (Just like Mr. Mackenzie, thought Hesione; I wonder if Mr. Mackenzie would look like him with a beard?) "I'm hauling, Anton. Master God, you think I have the wind of a bassoonist? Or arms like an accordion-player? Here it comes now, the dirty beast. Up, my fine mewler; up, my great howler. How do you like your little trip through the air? Why don't you screech now, lovesick one? Why don't you yowl, dangling so prettily? Try it in C sharp, why don't you?"

Hesione watched pudgy hands methodically pulling in line. At the end of the line was an arrow, and the arrow pierced the still feebly writhing body of the cat. "Master, you're a superb marksman," said Anton admiringly.

Hannes grunted again, without disturbing his cigar. "Hit him in the middle register, ay? Teach him to be a tenor, ha? Fifteen this week. Who says the nobility and gentry are the only huntsmen? And all due to your inventive genius, my friend. Ah, if you could only orchestrate so deftly."

"What they saying, Miss Zioney? You understand this funny talk?"

It was a shock. Naturally (naturally?) she understood. Not so well as the time before, for Anton's accent and Hanne's vocabulary threw her off sometimes, but quite well enough. How did it happen Lila couldn't?

"They — they're joking. Sort of."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Joking, huh? Pulling up that miserable cat like a fish; like nasty little kids — only much worse. Kids are only real mean for a short time, but men can work at it. Joking."

The window shut with a bang, cutting off the laughter at some new quip. "Lila, Lila — let's get out of here. Quickly."

"You think they any better somewhere else?" She stepped on the starter and Hesione wondered if the men up there heard the anachronistic noise, but neither head turned toward them, nor was the window reopened. "Should I put the lights on?"

"I wouldn't." (One anachronism at a time.) "Just drive very slowly."

Even at their crawling pace the car jolted and bumped over the cobbles. Hesione's dread of discovery was far from the terror she had felt, trapped in the concentration camp — the personal, immediate fear of humiliation, torment, death. Now her panic was only for not reaching Peggy, of perhaps never seeing Peggy again, of not being able to say, My dearest, my baby, it was all my fault, all of it — forgive me!

For no one in this musty old city (was her guess right, was this Vienna?) would do them injury, would be more than incredulously curious about two visitors from 50 or 75 years in the future, driving an impossible machine through their streets. If she was truly trapped she had nothing to fear for herself; Hapsburg Vienna loved actresses —

"What way would you say now, Miss Zioney?"

They had come out of the narrow alley onto a broad boulevard. Hesione looked at the soft stone or brick housefronts, the soft pulsing light of the gas streetlamps, the soft outlines of an odd cab or carriage pulled by gently clopping horses. "Go straight," she decided, "and let's stick to one direction. See if we can get out into the country."

"Don't see why there might be less of these holes in town." She kept the car headed straight, still grumbling. "After awhile we'll run out of gas, and then what? Just as well stay put and wait for one of them holes or whatever to catch up with us."

"I was only thinking there'd be fewer people to notice us. It would be pretty awkward to be seen and have to explain. They'd think we were crazy." But she was not really engaged with their possible embarrassment; at the moment she was puzzling over Lila's incomprehension of the two men's conversation. Why had she been able to understand them and Lila not? What was there inside her that could communicate so easily with savage cruelty? And before that, with absolute evil? She shook her head.

"Something wrong, Miss Zioney? I mean, something new wrong?"

"I don't believe so, Lila," she said gently. "Does it seem to you the houses are thinning out?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Do appear like we coming to a park or something. No more street lamps up ahead. Think it's safe going on like this without our lights?"

"Oh, safe," murmured Hesione. "What's safe?"

Soon they were in the midst of trees, long avenues of trees that shut out the moonlight. The cobbles gave way to a graveled road easier on the springs. Without asking Hesione again, Lila switched on the headlights. A startled hare, caught in the beams as the road curved, jumped for the bushes.

"People is the same everywhere, ain't they?"

She had wanted to confess her fault to Peggy, to lay her guilt before the girl and ask absolution. Absolution for what? What had she done? She was willing to concede she had been wicked or sinful or whatever the right term was, but specifically in what? How?

The fact remained that Lila and the men had not spoken the same language, while she had. At least she had understood it. She understood the language of evil, but Lila seemed to understand the nature of the men who perpetrated the evil: people is the same everywhere, ain't they?

"Lila," she began.

"Yesm?"

"Lila, you must be — good."

"Well, I had three husbands, counting only regular weddings. And —"

"Oh, I don't mean that." Sex, sex; everyone was mad with it, thought of nothing else day and night. Of all the pursuits engaging the attentions and emotions of human beings, why was this one function set apart as an object of obsession? "I mean really good. Kind and loving. But . . . Oh, I don't know exactly what I mean."

"You tired and worried. Relax, everything going to be all right."

"I hope so."

The wood or park or whatever it was, came to an end. Instead of gravel road there was a rutted dirt one, and the previous slow pace became even slower. Lila said, "Before we run out of gas we going to run out of nourishment. What you suppose we can do about eating around here?"

"Do without," replied Hesione grimly. "We daren't leave the car or become separated. Just stick to it till we're out, back where we came from, or until there's no hope left."

"That's show business," said Lila.

Had she deliberately withdrawn herself from Catherine? Had she been the superior, the virtuous maiden, condescending toward the betrayed sister, arrogantly protecting her wifely status against the viciousness of Maurice and the weakness of Catherine? But she hadn't, she hadn't, she assured herself. That was twisting everything around. Maurice had been a wicked man, a betrayer, a seducer, a lecher, a man of ungoverned desires. No matter what her impulse of self-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

condemnation for real or imagined shortcomings, natural enough when confronted by these visions of wickedness, no one on earth could say Catherine — yes, her own dear Catherine — was anything but weak, or that it was possible to excuse Maurice's immorality.

Lila braked. "I'm sure as can be we not going right."

"But Lila, there can't be any right or wrong way of getting out. It's all chance."

"Maybe." There was an obstinate quality in Lila's voice. "But the Lord helps those that help themselves — not just those who hope for the best."

Hesione Hadstone, Hesione Mallest, Mrs. Paul Drummond, Cicely Waynefleet, Lady Macbeth, would have been reasonable, rational, firm. She said, "All right, Lila. If you've got a hunch, follow it."

Lila wrenched the steering wheel hard over to the right and drove off the road into a field of hay. The right front tire hit a rock, and the car twisted sharply. Lila stepped on the gas, driving with a new, uncanny certainty. And then, as they hit another rock and the car wobbled on three wheels, they were in full daylight on ordinary concrete, not more than forty feet from a black and white marker, U. S. 60.

Still shaky, but heartened by her next series of telephone calls ("Mrs. Drummond, believe me, I'm not keeping anything from you. Your daughter is completely out of danger. I think it better you don't speak to her on the phone; I'll cancel my orders if it upsets you too much, but I hope you won't insist.") ("Honestly Hezzy, old Pletzel's telling the truth. Maybe he's a little nuts about the psychological angle, but I've seen Peggy and she's all right. Doesn't want to talk much; Pletzel thinks she may spill everything — if there's anything to spill — when she sees you. But a day won't make any difference, may even be better Pletzel says. So don't wear yourself out; take it as easy as you can."), Hesione stopped in Amarillo for a real bed, a real bath, a real meal. She recognized that she really enjoyed eating, that she thought about food, instead of merely accepting it. She didn't believe she was a glutton (she preferred the word to the prettier gourmand), but unless she were to get fat — an unlikely possibility with her metabolism — it was the only passion without complications.

Falling asleep, she pondered over the second breaking through what Mr. Peterberry called the time-space continuum. She had gotten back, twice; why had none of the lost airplanes ever returned? Was the explanation purely material — no landing fields in the world of the past (but not all adventured into the remote past; she herself had gone, the first time, into a world where there were landing fields), no fuel if they ran out? — or was the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

answer more subtle? Something to do with what spiritualists called being earthbound? It seemed silly. . . . Maybe a few could come back, but conditions had never been exactly right . . . ?

But the vanishing airplanes were not her chief concern. Punishment (leaving aside the question of for what) yes, but punishment — if it was punishment and not just senseless torment — should have a purpose. At least, if everything she had heard and read had validity. Thd scene she and Lila had witnessed ought to convey a lesson, bring its point home to her. But she had never been cruel to animals. Not unkind or indifferent even. Paul's great Danes, though she did think them something of an affectation and an extravagance, she always accepted; in turn they bounded at her and cavorted for her in what seemed to be genuine pleasure. She remembered a story she had once read about a condemned criminal who had dreamed the wrong dream; was it possible she was being punished the wrong punishment?

Was it possible that in some unreasonable way — what had reason to do with any of this? Planes falling into nothing, people disappearing and reappearing; her own experience — the punishment was not connected with any wrong, but was simply an inevitable corollary to her life? Crudely, was she somehow paying for her success? Did the horrible scene represent some sort of compensation — No, it didn't fit. Besides, she had already paid for her success in hard work and lots of other ways. This was some puritanical notion.

Besides, why should her punishment and Lila's be identical? If they were. Lila hadn't understood . . . There was no use going over that again. Lila had been able to find her way out; she had had to wait for fortune. Election, Calvinists called it, while Lila had Grace. . . . Maybe all that — shades of a multitude of earnest theologians — had nothing to do with it. . . . Troubled, she fell asleep and dreamed she was ten feet tall while Peggy and Catherine, Maurice, Paul and Lila were midgets who ran from her screaming in fear.

Next morning she dismissed — or almost dismissed — her speculations as morbid vapors. Only one plane had been lost the day before, and three times as many amnesiacs had returned as had vanished. "Maybe it's coming to an end," she said to Lila. "Maybe it's nearly over. If the preacher was right the balance may have been restored, or nearly; Mr. Peterberry's breaks in time and space may be closing up."

As the day passed her confidence increased; the clear mountain air seemed too thin and pure to hold traps and pitfalls. They drove through New Mexico all day, pausing only for food and gasoline, and through Arizona all night, going faster now, excited not only by the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

comparatively long period of immunity, but at their nearness to the goal.

Then, after they crossed the river into Blythe, and Hesione had gone looking for a phone for the last time, she once more walked into another world.

It was a strange world this time, a grotesque world bearing little resemblance to reality of any kind. No, reality was not the word; this was real enough, but it was somehow subjective. Not like a dream, but like her projection of a character in a play. That was it; now that the first dismaying shock to her conviction that it would not happen again had softened, she realized she was somehow in a theater. A theater she had never seen or heard of or conceived existing. Reinhardt, she thought; no, Dali — no, no; chaos, Hell . . . I don't know . . .

Somewhere in the vast distance there was a roll of thunder which echoed, dying away in explosive mutters, "Do you solemnly swear (or affirm)?" "Do you solemnly swear (or affirm)?" "Or affirm . . . or affirm . . . or affirm . . ."

From under her feet, or at least from some depths around her, a harsh feminine voice squeaked, "Oh yes, your honor, I seen him, I reconized him. He had a cap on; I seen him shooting with a gun as it went by; I'd know him out of a hunnerd; he was an Eyetalian or some other kind of a foreigner. Oh yes, sir, your honor." And then the lightning was bayonets, hundreds and thousands and millions of bayonets all moving forward in even rows. The bayonets turned into wriggling snakelike creatures, and someone was shouting, "Fresh eels today; fresh eels today; I got fresh eels today."

The thin voice of an old man slashed from the sky like sleet. "Motion denied. Objection overruled. Denied. Overruled. Denied. Overruled. Denied. . . ."

Now the voice of the eel-caller, calm but passionate, speaking with a strong accent: "Everybody that knows these two arms knows very well that I did not need to go in between the street and kill a man to take the money —"

"Irrelevant . . . irrelevant . . . irrelevant . . ."

"This is what I say: I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature on the earth — I would not wish to any of them what I had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of. But my conviction is that I have suffered for things that I am guilty of."

The old man's voice came through again, chuckling like hail. "Did you see what I did to those two anarchist bastards today?" It was taken up and repeated, as by a quartet in close harmony, "Did you see what I did to those two anarchist bastards today?" And then as by a great polyphonic choir, reaching from horizon to horizon, but lost to all

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dignity and shrieking in a simian chatter, "Did you see what I did to those two anarchist bastards today?"

Soft and cottonlike came the whisper, ". . . a grave breach of decorum . . ."

Hesione put her hands to her head. She had been prepared, she had steeled herself, for some new scene of iniquity. Well, there was undoubtedly iniquity here, though she as yet had no clear notion of what it was all about, but the pervasive, overriding impression she was getting was one of . . . What? Obstinacy rather than malevolence; refusal to understand; lack of comprehension; stupidity . . . No, it was a lack — something missing — but a deeper lack than any of these . . .

The accented voice, still calmer, spoke again. "If it had not been for these things, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. Never in our full life could we hope to do so much work for tolerance, for joostice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by accident. Our words — our lives — our pain nothing! The taking of our lives — the lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler — all! That last moment belongs to us — that agony is our triumph!"

This part at least was from something she'd been in — when was it? — years and years ago. Patricia, sister of the female lead. The speech was a quotation from a man who had died in the electric chair — Vanzetti. What had Vanzetti to do with her?

The colossal stage on which she was standing began shrinking, and she became aware of the proscenium arch, drops, flys, wings. They drew in closer rapidly as they diminished in size, but she had no sense of peril, or that any wonder was happening. In fact she felt it quite natural for her to have gotten here, and that she could do as Lila had done — not on a hunch this time, but under direction — in finding her way out. When she was ready. Not yet.

She moved up toward the center of the stage, speaking as though compelled by an urgent excitement, yet in full command. "Go get some water, and wash this filthy witness from your hand. Why did you bring these daggers from the place? They must lie there: go carry them, and smear the sleepy grooms with blood."

Somehow there was no necessity to play the rest of the scene; it was as though she had perfected her Lady Macbeth except for these lines she had to rehearse a final time before opening night. The footlights (somehow she had not noticed the footlights earlier, or they had been too far away) dimmed to a pale gray line which receded, and strangely suffused the eastern sky. She walked off, surefooted despite the gloom,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

despite the unearthly quality of the surroundings, despite the terror which had run just below the surface of her mind till just a moment ago.

There was no backstage, no dressing rooms, no walls or doors, nothing but looming shapes and shadows which she stepped around. Instead of the firm boards underfoot, her shoes sank into packed sand; she was not surprised to find that the light on the horizon was dawn, or that the shapes around her were giant cacti, mesquite, thornbushes.

She walked surefooted, despite the sand, knowing she was going in the right direction, undisturbed by the strangest thing of all: that there was no barrier, no sharp translation, no jolting change from one world to another. She knew that in a matter of hours she would come to a highway. It was over; the holes in space and time were healing; either sealed already, or rapidly becoming so. In either case she knew she would come upon no more of them.

"Oh Peggy," she cried; "Oh Peggy dear."

Her guilt did not make her wretched; the instant knowledge of it (instant? She had known it for years, lived with it daily. She had simply refused to see it) gave her, not absolution, but remoteness, as though it had long since been accounted for. Like a sentence commuted to time served. She had never played any role but Hesione Hadstone; she was a ham. How she had prided herself on the range between Lady Cicely and Lady Macbeth — what a foolish delusion. They were merely two facets of the ruthless, selfish, callous — Hesione.

Peggy, Catherine, Paul, Lila . . . *Maurice.*

"Oh God," she said. "Maurice."

For it was not Maurice who had been the monster. It was herself. The young Hesione, pretty and graceful (but not so pretty as Catherine), talented (everyone said so; even Catherine admitted it; what did talent matter to Catherine, so much more poised, attractive, and sensitive?), and envious. So envious of Catherine that jealousy burned into her bones. Sympathy did not mitigate her new clarity of judgment as she looked back on her youthful, untouched self (untouched? Was she today any different? It was not everyone else who was obsessed by sex, it was she; she was so aware of it that she saw it everywhere; not all the perfumes of Arabia could remove it from her consciousness; her aloofness and control were compulsive, like women who washed their hands a hundred times a day) tantalizing poor slow, stupid Maurice. Granted his wants were quick and brutish, still they represented love of a kind, perhaps the only kind he was capable of. (No; that wasn't quite accurate, even as a supposition; a remnant of her selfrighteousness dictated that thought; let it stand simply that Maurice's lusts represented love of a kind.) What had her calculated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chastity represented? If his panting pursuit had been so wicked, how was she to define her own part? Innocence compounding a felony? Or — what was the legal term? — practising entrapment?

And Catherine? Oh, how superior, how smug she had felt toward Catherine. Poor, susceptible Catherine, who had recklessly yielded to Maurice's importunities, and then been displaced and superseded, relegated to the abandoned role, who — in the face of all prudence — had been tempted again. Because she did not hoard herself with decent caution, but was vulnerable in a way Hesione never could be. Catherine had been incapable of judging Maurice; she could give or withhold, and she had chosen to give. Freely.

Why, marveled Hesione, not crushed but finally enlightened, I was the one who killed her. "Oh Catherine," she said aloud. "How could you have been so patient?"

Filled with strange energy, she plodded on through the sand. "I never gave out love in my life," she exclaimed, amazed. "Never."

Maurice. Catherine. Peggy. Peggy . . .

Peggy had been such a *cute* baby. Such a declaration of independence from Maurice; from men, from sex. Such a justification of the higher, the nobler in her, to contrast with Maurice's bestiality. And then Peggy had been merely cute; not beautiful, not brilliant, not talented. So she had been so tolerant, so understanding, so *amused*, by Peggy. Forgive my inferior offspring, she had said in effect, my unremarkable daughter, my funny little child. Applaud my gentle wit as I substitute one vowel for another: Peggy — Puggy. When Maurice had proved useless (what had she done to make him useful, except to demonstrate her superiority to him?) she had worked to get things for the child: the clothes and the care. But she would have worked anyway; she had taken credit for self-sacrifice when she had offered up no self. No love.

It was the same for everyone; Paul, Lila, everyone. Paul was such a reasonable, understanding, undemanding husband — the antithesis of Maurice. Yet the two attitudes were only reactions to her own inviolability. She was untouched by Maurice's demands; Paul made no demands because she was untouchable. She gave out no love because she had no love to give out.

The preacher had been right; the evil had become overweighty, the world had turned over, ripping open the neat seams which had kept the present untouched by the past and one place distinct from another. And what was evil? Cruelty, self-righteousness, stupidity, insensitivity, yes — but in the end it was essentially lack of love. Her excursions had not been haphazard nor accidental; they were designed and pointed, induced for her particular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

benefit. The selfrighteous persecution of Vanzetti, the playful savagery of the two musicians, the Nazi horrors, were of her making. The piles of children's shoes were on her conscience.

For a moment she rebelled. Surely not? There were degrees, weren't there, and didn't infinite differences of degree produce a difference in kind?

Did this absolve her? Was she about to introduce witnesses to her good character, or her excellent intentions, or her stupidity or ignorance? She accepted the guilt of the shoes.

And the other guilts. And all the other guilts.

One thing she had not understood fully till now; she had not been suffering punishment. You didn't do, or fail to do, and then pay for it as casually as you put nickels in a parking meter. She had not been punished; she had been shown the protean face of evil and she had recognized it, because it was not strange to her.

The sun was up now; the desert would be blazing hot in an hour. It didn't matter. The holes were closed for her and they were closing for everyone else as well. She guessed this meant no revolution in human nature, no substitution of the rule of love for the rule of greed. It only meant — she thought — that the balance had been momentarily righted, and good and evil stood, for an instant, level. It probably didn't mean anyone would profit long or greatly, but perhaps all — even those who had not fallen through the holes — would be a little more aware, a little more tentative.

Walking through sand which seemed to have become firmer, she caught sight of cars on the highway ahead.

It wouldn't take her more than fifteen or twenty minutes to reach it. She had no idea where she was. She might be a hundred or two hundred or five hundred miles from the hospital and Peggy and her chance, not to undo; what was done could not be undone, but to do anew and freshly. The distance didn't matter; if she couldn't begin today she would tomorrow. And there would be no faltering.

In the sky a great plane's aluminum glinted in the sun. It flew westward purposefully, and Hesione sensed that the pilot, for the first time in a long while, had no fear of suddenly disappearing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Late last-year the United States Air Force released a detailed report on its long-term analysis of "flying saucers," formerly known officially as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and now rechristened, with greater precision, Unidentified Aerial Objects (though UAOs is harder to say). The American press, once so avid to print "saucer" rumors, is apparently tired of both sides of the controversy, and in most cases ran only inadequate fragments of the USAF release. F&SF has no fixed editorial policy concerning "saucers" (though it has a marked policy as to the violation of publishing standards by some "saucer" books; see this month's Recommended Reading); *but we do feel that the skeptical, the credulous and the merely curious are entitled to the full text of this significant summary.*

Unidentified Aerial Objects

by THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

THE RESULTS OF AN INVESTIGATION begun by the Air Force in 1947 into the field of Unidentified Aerial Objects (so-called flying saucers) were finally released late in 1955.

No evidence of the existence of the popularly termed "flying saucers" was found.

The report was based on study and analysis by a private scientific group under the supervision of the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Dayton, Ohio. Since the instigation of the investigation almost eight years ago, methods and procedures have been so refined that of the 131 sightings reported during the first four months of 1955 only three per cent were listed as unknown.

Commenting on this report, Secretary of the Air Force Donald A. Quarles said: "On the basis of this study we believe that no objects such as those popularly described as flying saucers have overflown the United States. I feel certain that even the unknown 3 per cent could have been explained as conventional phenomena or illusions if more complete observational data had been available.

"However, we are now entering a period of aviation technology in which aircraft of unusual configuration and flight characteristics will begin to appear.

"The Air Force and the other Armed Services have under devel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opment several vertical-rising, high performance aircraft, and as early as last year a propeller driven vertical-rising aircraft was flown. The Air Force will fly the first jet-powered vertical-rising airplane in a matter of days. We have another project under contract with AVRO Ltd., of Canada, which could result in disc-shaped aircraft somewhat similar to the popular concept of a flying saucer. An available picture, while only an artist's conception, could illustrate such an object.*

"While some of these may take novel forms, such as the AVRO project, they are direct-line descendants of conventional aircraft and should not be regarded as supra-natural or mysterious. We expect to develop airplanes that will fly faster, higher and perhaps farther than present designs, but they will still obey natural laws and if manned, they will still be manned by normal terrestrial airmen. Other than reducing runway requirements we do not expect vertical-rising aircraft to have more outstanding military characteristics than conventional types.

"Vertical-rising aircraft capable of transition to supersonic horizontal flight will be a new phenomenon in our skies, and under certain conditions could give the illusion of the so-called flying saucer. The Department of Defense will make every effort within bounds of security to keep the public informed of these developments so they can be recognized for what they are."

Mr. Quarles added: "I think we must recognize that other countries also have the capability of developing vertical-rising aircraft, perhaps of unconventional shapes. However we are satisfied at this time that none of the sightings of so-called 'flying saucers' reported in this country were in fact aircraft of foreign origin."

The Air Force offers the following summary of its 1955 analysis:

Reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects (popularly termed "flying saucers" or flying discs) have been received by the U. S. Air Force since mid-1947 from many and diverse sources. Although there was no evidence that the unexplained reports of unidentified objects constituted a threat to the security of the United States, the Air Force determined that all reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects should be investigated and evaluated to determine if "flying saucers" represented technological developments not known to this country.

In order to discover any pertinent trend or pattern inherent in the data, and to evaluate or explain any trend or pattern found, appropriate methods of reducing these data from reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects to a form amenable to scientific appraisal were employed. In general, the original data upon which this study was based consisted of impressions and interpretations

* See inside front cover.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of apparently unexplainable events, and seldom contained reliable measurements of physical attributes. This subjectivity of the data presented a major limitation to the drawing of significant conclusions, but did not invalidate the application of scientific methods of study.

The reports received by the U. S. Air Force on Unidentified Aerial Objects were reduced to IBM punched-card abstracts of data by means of logically developed forms and standardized evaluation procedures. Evaluation of sighting reports, a crucial step in the preparation of the data for statistical treatment, consisted of an appraisal of the reports and the subsequent categorization of the object or objects described in each report. A detailed description of this phase of the study stresses the careful attempt to maintain complete objectivity and consistency.

Analysis of the refined and evaluated data derived from the original reports of sightings consisted of (1) a systematic attempt to ferret out any distinguishing characteristics inherent in the data of any of their segments, (2) a concentrated study of any trend or pattern found, and (3) an attempt to determine the probability that any of the *unknowns* represent observations of technological developments not known to this country.

The first step in the analysis of the data revealed the existence of certain apparent similarities between cases of objects definitely identified and those not identified. Statistical methods of testing when applied indicated a low probability that these apparent similarities were significant. An attempt to determine the probability that any of the *unknowns* represented observations of technological developments not known to this country necessitated a thorough re-examination and re-evaluation of the cases of objects not originally identified; this led to the conclusion that this probability was very small.

The special study which resulted in this report (*Analysis of Reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects*, 5 May 1955) started in 1953. To provide the study group with a complete set of files, the information cut-off date was established as of the end of 1952. It will accordingly be noted that the statistics contained in all charts and tables in this report are terminated with the year 1952. In these charts, 3201 cases have been used.

As the study progressed, a constant program was maintained for the purpose of making comparisons between the current cases received after 1 January 1953, and those being used for the report. This was done in order that any change or significant trend which might arise from current developments could be incorporated in the summary of this report.

The 1953 and 1954 cases show a general and expected trend of in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

creasing percentages in the finally identified categories. They also show decreasing percentages in categories where there was insufficient information and those where the phenomena could not be explained. This trend had been anticipated in the light of improved reporting and investigating procedures.

Official reports on hand at the end of 1954 totaled 4834. Of these, 425 were produced in 1953 and 429 in 1954. These 1953 and 1954 individual reports (a total of 854), were evaluated on the same basis as were those received before the end of 1952. The results are as follows:

Balloons	16%
Aircraft	20%
Astronomical	25%
Other	13%
Insufficient Information	17%
Unknown	9%

As the study of the current cases progressed, it became increasingly obvious that if procedures could be improved, the percentages of those cases which contained insufficient information and those remaining unexplained would be greatly reduced. The key to a higher percentage of solutions appeared to be in rapid "on the spot" investigations by trained personnel. On the basis of this, a revised program was established by Air Force Regulation 200–2, Subject: "Unidentified Flying Objects Reporting" (Short Title: UFOB), dated 12 August 1954.

This new program, which had begun to show marked results before January 1955, provided primarily that the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron (Air Defense Command) would carry out all field investigations. This squadron has sufficient units and is so deployed as to be able to arrive "on the spot" within a very short time after a report is received. After treatment by the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron, all information is supplied to the Air Technical Intelligence Center for final evaluation. This cooperative program has resulted, since 1 January 1955, in reducing the insufficient information cases to 7 per cent and the unknown cases to 3 per cent of the totals.

The period 1 January 1955 to 5 May 1955 accounted for 131 Unidentified Aerial Object reports received. Evaluation percentages of these are as follows:

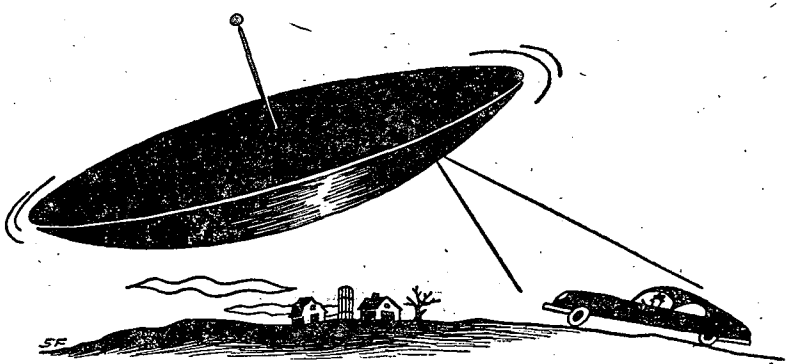
Balloons	26%
Aircraft	21%
Astronomical	23%
Other	20%
Insufficient Information	7%
Unknown	3%

All available data were included in this study which was prepared by a panel of scientists both in and out of the Air Force. On the basis of this study it is believed that all the Unidentified Aerial Objects could have been explained if more complete observational data had been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

available. Insofar as the reported aerial objects which still remain unexplained are concerned, there exists little information other than the impressions and interpretations of their observers. As these impressions and interpretations have been replaced by the use of improved methods of investigation and reporting, and by scientific analysis, the number of unexplained cases has decreased rapidly towards the vanishing point.

Therefore, on the basis of this evaluation of the information, it is considered to be highly improbable that reports of Unidentified Aerial Objects examined in this study represent observations of technological developments outside of the range of present-day scientific knowledge. It is emphasized that there has been a complete lack of any valid evidence of physical matter in any case of a reported Unidentified Aerial Object.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It may seem like editorial schizophrenia to follow the United States Air Force's firmly negative report with a story about "an Adnaxian flying saucer;" but I think that this pleasing reduction to absurdity, called to my attention by the assiduous Judith Merril, may be more apt to please the USAF than the earnest adherents of George Adamski.

The Spaceman Cometh

by HENRY GREGOR FELSEN

I WAS TRYING TO COMPOSE THE speech I was to make at our town assembly, and like most writers I was gazing out of the window looking for inspiration in the sky. I was looking at a small white cloud when an Adnaxian flying saucer sailed across my line of vision and disappeared in the direction of Razza's Woods.

Although I now live in Center Valley, Iowa, with my earthborn wife and two children, and I have assumed the disguise of a middle-aged male human, I was born on the planet Adnaxas and lived there for several hundred earth-years. When I was forced to flee my home planet several earth-years ago, I escaped in a space ship that I stole from the Adnaxian Air Force. That's why I know what it was I saw.

It was no accident that the Adnaxian pilot was heading for Razza's Woods. I had parked my old flying saucer out there at treetop level, and although I had rendered it invisible to human eyes, I knew the saucerman must have spotted it and was coming down to investigate.

I had a great and terrible feeling of despair.

Until this moment I had been certain that I was the only Adnaxian who knew about earth. I had first come here to scout earth for destruction, but to use an old Adnaxian expression, I had goofed. I happened to fall in love with a girl I met in a drugstore.

Because of that and certain difficulties I encountered when I returned to Adnaxas to make my report, I had fled back to earth, married the girl, and settled down to a quiet life in a small town.

But now the earth had been discovered by another Adnaxian, and I knew too well what that meant. The pilot would return to Adnaxas with his report. Within hours there would be a fleet of bombers on their

© 1955 by Henry Gregor Felsen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way through space. For it has always been the Adnaxian custom, when a new planet is discovered, to destroy the planet before it can commit an act of aggression. After that a team of scientists is put to work examining the planet fragments to determine whether it would have been a hostile or a friendly planet.

My duty was clear. Somehow I had to prevent the saucerman from returning to Adnaxas, so that the existence and location of earth would remain unknown to my ruthless home planet.

But how?

My minds, conscious, subconscious and Adnaxian, refused to function. The only plan that came to me was to surrender myself, start back toward Adnaxas with the saucerman, and somehow destroy him and myself before we reached that planet. The thought of leaving my wife and children forever made me so unhappy I groaned aloud.

"Is something wrong, dear? Are you ill?"

I turned. My wife was standing in the doorway, a look of concern on her face and a dustcloth in her hand.

"I'm all right," I said mournfully. "It's this speech I have to make." I seized this lie and went on bravely, "I can't think of any ideas. I think I'll take a little walk. I might get an idea that way."

"I'm sure you'll think of something," my wife said. "A good long walk will clear your head. Sitting in here and smoking so much, no wonder you can't think."

I went to her and took her in my arms. "Goodby, darling," I said, trying to keep my voice under control. I gave her a last, long, loving kiss.

"Where are the children?" I asked quietly. "I'd like to say goodby to them too."

"What's the matter with you?" my wife asked. "You're only going for a little walk. The way you act, one would think you were taking a trip to the moon."

The moon — when I reached that satellite my trip would just have started. But my wife thought I was an earthman, and this was no time to explain that for the last ten years she had been married to a being from outer space, and that I was leaving her in order to save the world. I mean, you just can't come out and tell your wife something like that after ten years. Chances are she wouldn't believe half of it.

I sighed and said the last earthwords that would ever pass my lips: "Yes, dear." Then I left the house and began my tragic journey out of this world.

"Take your hat!" my wife shouted after me. "If you go walking around bareheaded, I'm the one who has to listen to your complaining about your sinus trouble!"

I pretended not to hear her and went off thinking bitter thoughts. What an inglorious beginning to a mission whose goal was the salvation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of earth. I was willing to make the sacrifice, but how awful that I could tell no one, not even my wife. I had to walk away from my loved ones as though for a little while, and never return. They would wait, wonder, worry, and finally decide I had deserted them. In time I would be declared dead, my children would be grown and my wife married to someone else. When I was thought of, it would be unkindly. Take my hat? It was a new hat, and expensive. Better to leave it. Perhaps it would fit the head of her next husband. It was the least I could do.

When I reached Razza's Woods, I took one last human look around, then reverted to my Adnaxian shape, which made me invisible to earthmen's eyes. As I did so I was seized by the most terrible pains, and I was terrified by a tearing sound that seemed to come from my body. And then, suddenly, I felt better. I looked down at myself and understood. Ten years of good earth home cooking had taken their toll, and I had outgrown my old Adnaxian Air Force uniform. The sudden change had popped my buttons and split my trousers. I sighed, and lost another button.

I had little time to mourn that which had once been my dashing figure. I heard blasts from a couple of shotguns — they couldn't have been more than a few hundred yards away — and at almost the same moment the Adnaxian saucer skimmed over my head and came to rest in the clearing where I stood. The moment it touched earth the pilot rendered it invisible to human eyes.

I heard excited voices and the sound of men crashing through the brush. In a moment Dave Nichols and Jack Wilson burst into the clearing carrying their guns and looking eagerly from side to side.

"He fell right in here," Dave shouted. "I got him with both barrels. Biggest damn' Canada goose you ever saw!"

"Canada goose my foot," Jack said. "I hit him after you missed, and it was a big canvasback duck. I saw those markings as clear as anything."

"Well, he ain't here," Dave said. "And we'd better keep looking. He won't go far with my lead in him."

"*Your* lead!" Jack yelled. "You mean *my* lead."

Arguing violently, my two neighbors moved on. The hatch on the saucer opened slowly and the saucerman looked around cautiously. Then he stepped out, clutching an Adnaxian molecule pistol in one hand and a thick briefcase in the other.

Knowing that one burst from the pistol could destroy the whole county, I hurried forward. "Don't shoot!" I cried in Adnaxian.

The saucerman aimed his pistol at me. "Don't shoot," I repeated. "I am one of you."

The saucerman lowered the pistol which, I now saw, he was holding by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the wrong end. "Eureka!" he exclaimed. "I have found you! Squadron Leader Ex-my-ex, I presume?"

"Yes," I said. "I am Ex-my-ex."

The saucerman looked at my tattered uniform and potbelly. "You've changed," he said a little sadly, putting away his pistol. "But then, I suppose it's a wonder you're alive at all, exiled here millions of light-years away from civilization. Don't you know me?"

I looked at him closely. "The pseudopodia are familiar, but I can't remember the name," I said lamely.

"My-ex-ex," he said. "University of Adnaxas. You were a student of mine in cosmichemistry."

"Of course," I said. "Now I remember. But what are you doing here, sir?"

"Looking for you, by order of the Presidex," he said. "He's quite anxious to get you back."

I shuddered. I had seen what happened to Adnaxians who had displeased the Presidex.

"When you fled," My-ex-ex went on, "popular opinion held that you were lost forever in space. But a few of us felt that you actually had a remote planet tucked up your sleeve. After the military gave up the search, some of us scientists were given the job of finding you. Since I knew you personally, I was chosen to make the first search-flight. And I seem to have found you. Stroke of luck, that, what?"

"For you," I said resignedly. "I'll return with you, sir. I suppose we might as well start back now." I was ready. The sooner we started, the sooner I could destroy us both in space.

"That's not possible," Professor My-ex-ex said, patting his brief case. "My orders were, if I found you on a new planet, to investigate the planet and bring back a complete report for the Presidex — so he'll know how to deal with the new planet, you know."

I knew. Hadn't I "dealt" with other planets myself? I'd destroyed fourteen singlehanded before fleeing Adnaxas. And now, earth was next.

But there was a ray of hope. Professor My-ex-ex had always been a good sort, a little vague at times, but kind. If I could show him what a fine place earth was, and how nice the people were, and let him see the peaceful charm of my family life, perhaps he would be moved to pity and spare us. Perhaps he would allow me to remain on earth, and not even report earth's existence to Adnaxas. It was worth a try. If I failed, there was always the violent ending in mid-space.

"Now," Professor My-ex-ex said briskly, "I trust you will assist me in my mission, which was communicated to me orally by the Secretary of Space. I can put in a good word for you when we return to Adnaxas, you know."

"I am yours to command, sir," I said, beginning my campaign to make him think kindly of earth.

"Good. Now, since you have man-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aged to survive on this planet for some time, I take it you have had some contact with the natives."

"Oh, yes," I said. "I not only assumed their form, but I married a local girl, and —"

"You *went native?*" Professor My-ex-ex looked at me disapprovingly.

"Yes, sir," I admitted, blushing. "I married a native girl and we have a family. After all, sir, I thought I would be here for life."

"Don't apologize, lad," Professor My-ex-ex said archly. "I'm not surprised. I know you Air Force chaps. Who else could dash off blindly into space, travel a million light-years, and wind up on a planet with girls? You rascal! I'd like to study your family. Could it be arranged without their knowing who I am?"

"Oh, sure," I said. "Change yourself into human form and I'll introduce you as an old friend from Brooklyn. Then, no matter what you say, no one will think you strange. I'll change into human form first, to show you what earth-people look like."

I changed back to my usual human form. The professor watched me closely, chuckling to himself and making notes for future lectures — and scolding himself because he had forgotten to bring along a camera. "I think I have it," he said, stepping back. "Join you in a moment, my boy."

A moment later he stood before me in human form. It was a fairly normal example of a human, vaguely familiar. I took a second, closer, look. The professor had changed himself to look exactly like me.

"Begging your pardon, sir," I said, "but you look exactly like me."

"Yes. Good job of copying, what?"

"But, sir," I said patiently, "it's awkward. It would be better if you changed to look like some other human."

Professor My-ex-ex stared. "What do you mean, Ex-my-ex?" he asked. "Don't all humans look alike?"

"No, sir," I said. "Except for twins and such, no two humans look alike."

"By Presidex, man!" the professor exclaimed. "If they all look different, how do they recognize one another?"

"You have to remember each face, and whose it is," I said.

"I've never heard of such chaos," the professor sputtered. "Now up on Adnaxas, where everyone looks exactly alike, you look at a fellow and you *know* him. But when no two look alike, that's nothing but reproductive anarchy. Very sloppy ethnogeny in *my* book, young man."

"Just give us time, sir," I said. "We're a young planet here, and not too polished as yet, but we're making progress. Why, only yesterday I saw two women wearing identical hats and they had identical looks on their faces."

The professor said something under his breath and changed again.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This time he appeared as the human equivalent of what he was in Adnaxian form. He turned out to be a hesitant, elderly gentleman with thick glasses, a small, ragged mustache, an unpressed tweed suit and a black Homburg. The briefcase remained unchanged. We decided to call him George Hoskins.

"Tell me, Henry," Professor Hoskins said as we set out for town, "just what sort of place is this planet?"

"Earth's a great little planet, sir," I said. "Plenty of schools, churches, shopping and transportation, and growing by leaps and bounds. It's been a real home away from home for me, sir, and I've grown to love the place."

"What is the temper of the natives?"

"Friendly as all outdoors," I said. "That's the very hallmark of an earthman, sir. The desire for friendship and peace."

"Well," the professor said, frowning, "just before I landed I heard several explosions, and a number of pellets came through the hull of my saucer, narrowly missing my *Kopf*. Is that the usual greeting your earth-guards give a visitor from another planet?"

I laughed. "That wasn't the military firing at you, sir," I said. "A couple of my neighbors thought you were a wild fowl."

"One of the enemies of the human?"

"Oh, no," I said. "Wild fowl are plump, harmless birds about the size of your briefcase. They couldn't hurt a human."

"Why do humans shoot them?"

"For sport and fun," I began. "It's quite a thrill to —" The look on the professor's face stopped me. What a way I had chosen to impress him with the peacefulness of the human! "It's not *all* sport," I said quickly. "The hunters eat the birds they kill."

"How revolting," the professor said. "So earthmen are friendly and peaceful, are they?"

"Well," I said, "yes, they are. You'll see. We're not a hostile people, sir." We had arrived in town now. "Earthmen are just plain folks who believe we ought to live and let — *look out, sir!*"

The professor had stepped off a curb without looking once in either direction. I grabbed him by the arm just in time to pull him from the path of a hot rod that was tearing past us.

"My word!" the professor cried, fumbling for his molecule pistol. "We are being attacked!"

"Please calm yourself, sir," I said. "There's nothing to be alarmed about. That was just one of the high-school boys on his way home in his car."

Professor My-ex-ex looked at me strangely. "You mean there was a *child* in control of that machine? Is it normal on earth to allow children to destroy others at will?"

"Oh, no," I said, "they don't *try*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to kill anyone. If they do, it goes hard with the parents. It's the children's way of having a little fun."

"I am beginning to dread the sound of that word," Professor My-ex-ex said. "Tell me, if human men shoot everything that moves, and human children run over everything that doesn't, how is it there are any humans left alive?"

I'm sure there's an answer, but I couldn't think of it.

Professor My-ex-ex looked quite unhappy by now and I was worried. I decided to stop off at the Town Club and show him how friendly men really are. I explained that the club was a place where men of good will and similar tastes gathered to enjoy one another's company and conversation.

The moment we entered, we ran into Big Bud Taplinger, one of our heartiest members. When I introduced George Hoskins to Big Bud, my large neighbor was delighted to meet my old friend.

"It's a real pleasure to meet you, George!" Big Bud roared, squeezing the professor's hand until the bones cracked. "Put 'er there!" Big Bud pumped the professor's arm with violent good will and clapped him on the back so hard that he knocked the poor old saucerman against the bar.

"Big Bud likes you," I whispered to My-ex-ex as I handed him back his glasses. "You'll like him too. He's the kindest-hearted, friendliest man you'll find on earth."

"He is?" My-ex-ex gasped. "Presidex help me!"

I wanted My-ex-ex to stay and have a drink, but he insisted we leave at once. Perhaps it was better that way.

As we approached my house we heard a series of shrill cries and several small figures in space helmets dashed toward us, firing their weapons wildly and dropping dead only to bounce up again and continue the battle.

"The Moogislanders!" My-ex-ex cried, reaching frantically for his molecule pistol. "Run for your life!"

"It's all right, sir," I said soothingly. "It's just the children playing war."

"Children? Playing *war?*"

"It's their favorite game," I said. "As long as they get a lot of fun —"

"That *word*," My-ex-ex groaned. "I must make a note of this custom. Children, playing *war!*"

"They don't really kill anyone," I said. "It's a harmless way of letting off steam, and the psychologists say that children who play out their fears —"

We were interrupted by two of the children, who got into a fist fight over possession of a gun. Both ran off crying, and the scratches I got from separating them hardly bled at all.

We went inside and I introduced My-ex-ex to my wife, telling her he was staying for dinner.

My wife gave My-ex-ex the big welcome, assured him he would be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no trouble at all, kissed me while he beamed at us, and bit me the moment he looked away. If I hadn't screamed in pain, he might never have noticed.

"Affectionate little woman," I said, laughing painfully as I led My-ex-ex into the living room.

"Yes, indeed," he said warily. "Hope she doesn't take too much of a liking to me. I bruise easily."

We sat down in the living room and turned on the TV set. "This is the way the earthman likes to live," I said to My-ex-ex. "Snug in his little home; with his wife and children, quietly watching the programs of entertainment and education that are on television. The children's programs are on now, but later you'll be able to get a better idea of our cultural values."

The kids came in and sat down to watch with us, and for the next two hours we were treated to a succession of cowboy adventures that filled the room with the thunder of hoofs, the roar of guns, and the thud of fists on flesh. We saw men shot, stabbed, trampled by wild horses. By the time the children's programs had ended, our little ones had gone to sleep and My-ex-ex was a nervous wreck.

We had dinner in front of the television set, and watched as the cowboy and space thrillers gave way to the crime stories. We were treated to the more refined forms of violence, sadism and mayhem.

All during these programs My-ex-ex kept making notes and shaking his head. I had the idea that he, being a stranger, failed to appreciate the cozy warmth and peaceful affection of family life — especially when I had to spank the children so they would go to bed.

My-ex-ex's dour expression didn't change until my mother-in-law arrived after dinner. My mother-in-law is a handsome, silver-haired woman and two minutes after she arrived, My-ex-ex was scurrying around getting her an ash tray, lighting her cigarette and making little jokes. When I saw how well the two of them were getting along, I felt the first real ray of hope for the future of earth. Might it not turn out that the mother would save earth as once the daughter had?

Everything went along beautifully for a while. My-ex-ex was discoursing learnedly on a theory of cosmichemical philology, and Mother-in-law was nodding her head, sipping tea as she listened. The fire on the hearth crackled, and there was an air of good cheer, comfort and love in our house. My-ex-ex had put away his notebook and was flirting with my mother-in-law.

Then came wrestling.

My-ex-ex stared in hurt disbelief as my mother-in-law turned her back on him and leaned toward the television screen. He was about to continue his discussion when the Gorilla Kid got the anaconda hold on Elegant Eddie.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Tear his arm off!" my mother-in-law screamed. "Break his back!"

My-ex-ex watched as the wrestlers gouged, kicked and twisted. His eyes were as big as teacups. "Wrestling," I whispered to him. "The women love to watch it, even if it isn't more than a farce."

"Beat his head against the post!" my mother-in-law screamed.

Professor My-ex-ex stood up. "I think I'll lie down for a while," he said weakly. Avoiding my mother-in-law's flailing fists, My-ex-ex went into the guest bedroom and closed the door.

I waited a while, and when I heard no sound I went into the guest room to investigate. The room was empty, and the window was open. My heart stood still. My-ex-ex had fled. He was on his way to Adnaxas, and it was too late to stop him. We were doomed!

A piece of paper on the dresser caught my eye, and I read the message on it, written in a scholarly hand:

Dear Ex-my-ex,

I am returning to Adnaxas. I have been horrified by the violence of humans, and terrified by their idea of fun. I offer you this promise. I will never mention earth on Adnaxas if you will never let earth know there is such a planet as Adnaxas. Since you fled we have a new Presidex and live peaceful, quiet lives. I shudder to think what our dear planet would be like if earthmen ever found it and moved in. Goodby forever. Regards to your family.

My-ex-ex

I read the message over and over. We were safe! Safe!

I went back into the living room. My wife and my mother-in-law were sitting quietly, now that the wrestling was over. They were talking about the price of yard goods.

"Where is your friend Professor Hoskins?" my mother-in-law asked me.

"He had to leave during the wrestling," I said. "He asked me to say goodby to you."

"He was a nice little man," my mother-in-law said. "But he must have had his nose in a book all his life. I don't think that man ever went anywhere or did anything."

"By the way," my wife said to me. "Do you have your speech ready for the town assembly?"

I shook my head. "Can't think of an idea," I said helplessly.

"Well," my wife said, "the kids are all so crazy about science fiction, and you read it all the time yourself, why not give a talk telling why it is impossible to travel between planets?"

"Darling," I said, "that's a wonderful suggestion. It's time we talked about space travel in terms of cold facts instead of fiction. I'm just the man to prove it can't be done."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bob Bloch is himself the most urbane and charming of men, with as ready a flow of wit — pointed, yet kindly — as I have ever heard. But though (like the Mikado's) his nature is love and light, he rarely lets these elements filter into his fiction. This humorous and gentle man has written some of the ghastliest chillers of our day, such as the classic Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper *or this latest tale, which opens with such deceptive quiet.*

I Kiss-Your Shadow

by ROBERT BLOCH

JOE ELLIOT SAT DOWN IN MY FAvorite chair, helped himself to a drink of my best whisky, and lighted one of my special cigarettes.

I didn't object.

But when he said, "I saw your sister last night," I was ready to protest. After all, a man can only take so much.

So I opened my mouth and then realized I had nothing to say. What *could* I say to a statement like that? I'd heard it from his lips possibly a hundred times before, during the months of their engagement, and it sounded perfectly natural then.

It would sound perfectly natural now, except for one thing: my sister had been dead for three weeks.

Joe Elliot smiled, or tried to. The result wasn't altogether successful. "I suppose you think I'm crazy," he said. "But it's the truth. I saw Donna. Or at least, her shadow."

He still wasn't providing me with the opportunity for a sensible answer: the only thing I could do was remain silent and listen.

"She came into the bedroom and leaned over me. I've been having trouble getting to sleep, ever since the accident, but I guess you know that. Anyway, I was lying there looking up at the ceiling and trying to decide if I should get up and pull down the shade, because the moonlight was so bright. Then I turned on my side and got ready to swing my legs out of bed, and there she was. Just standing there, bending over me and holding her arms out."

Elliot leaned forward. "Sure, I know what you're thinking. The moonlight was deflected by something in the room and made a shadow, and I made the rest of it myself. Or I really was asleep and didn't know it. But I know what I saw. It was Donna, all right — I'd recognize her anywhere, from the shape."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I found my voice, or a reasonable facsimile. "What did she do?" I asked.

"*Do?* She didn't do anything. Just stood there, holding her arms out as if she were waiting for something."

"What was she waiting for?"

Elliot stared at the floor. "This is really the hard part," he murmured. "It sounds so — well, the hell with how it sounds. When Donna and I were engaged, she had this trick of hers. We'd be talking, or perhaps getting ready to do the dishes when I ate over at her place, some ordinary thing like that. And then, all at once she'd hold out her arms. I got so I recognized the gesture. It meant she wanted to be kissed. So I'd kiss her. And — go ahead, laugh! — that's what I did last night. I got up out of bed and kissed her shadow."

I didn't laugh. I didn't do anything. I just sat there and waited for him to continue. When he showed no signs of saying anything further, I had to fill the gap. "You kissed her. And then what happened?"

"Why, nothing. She just went away."

"Disappeared?"

"No. She went away. The shadow released me and then turned around and walked through the door."

"The shadow *released* you," I said. "Does that mean you —?"

He nodded. I'm not a nod-interpreter, but it was obvious that there was no defiance in his movement; only a sort of resignation. "That's right. When I kissed her she put her arms around me. I — I saw it. And I *felt* it. I felt her kiss, too. Funny sensation, kissing a shadow. Real, and yet not all there." He glanced down at the glass in his hand. "Like a watered drink."

There was something wrong with his comparison, but then there was something wrong with the whole story. I suppose the main trouble lay in mere chronology — he'd come to me with it just about 50 years too late.

Fifty years ago, it might not have sounded quite so odd. Not in the days when people still believed in ghosts, by and large; the days when even so eminent and hardheaded a psychologist as William James was active in the Society for Psychical Research. There was a certain receptivity then to the sentimental approach — undying love, capable of reaching beyond the grave, and all that sort of thing. But to hear it *now* was wrong.

The only thing that kept me from coming right out and saying so was the realization that there was another aspect to the business even wronger than the rest. Joe Elliot himself. *He* was the professional skeptic, the confirmed scoffer.

Of course, maybe the shock of Donna's death . . .

"Don't say it," he sighed. "I know how cockeyed and corny it all sounds, and I know what you're

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thinking. I won't argue with you. The accident did hit me pretty hard, you understand that. And I admit I was in some kind of shock-state when they pulled me out of the car down there in the ravine. But I snapped out of it before the funeral. You know that, too. And if you don't believe it, just check with Doc Foster."

My turn to nod.

"I was all right at the funeral and after," he continued. "You've seen me almost every day since then. Have you noticed anything . . . offbeat?"

"No."

"So it wasn't just imagination. It couldn't be."

"Then what's your answer?"

He stood up. "I have no answer. I just wanted to tell you what happened. Because it's one of those things where you must tell someone, and you're the logical person. I can trust you not to go around repeating it. Besides, you're her brother, and there's a chance that she might — come to you."

Joe Elliot moved to the door.

"Leaving so soon?" I asked.

"Tired," he said. "I didn't sleep very much last night, afterwards."

"Look," I said. "How about a sedative? I've got some stuff here that —"

"Thanks, but I'd rather not." He opened the door. "I'll call you in a day or so. We can have lunch together."

"You're sure you're —"

"Yes, I'm all right." He smiled and went out.

I frowned and stayed in. I was still frowning as I got ready for bed. Something was definitely wrong with Elliot's story and that meant something was definitely wrong with Elliot. I wished I knew the answer.

"*There's a chance that she might — come to you.*"

I crawled between the sheets and noted that the moonlight was bright on my ceiling tonight, too. But I didn't look at the moonlight very long. I closed my eyes and contemplated the chance. It seemed to be a very slim one, as chances go.

My sister Donna was dead and in her grave. I hadn't seen her die, but I was the first one summoned right after the accident, as soon as the police arrived on the scene. I saw them lift her out of the crumpled car, and she was dead, no doubt about it. I didn't like to think about seeing her. I didn't like to think about seeing Joe Elliot, either, shaking in shock; unconscious of my presence, unconscious of the gash in his forehead, unconscious even of the fact that Donna was dead. He'd kept talking to her while they carried her to the ambulance, trying to make her understand that it was an accident, there was oil-slick on the road, the car had skidded. But Donna never heard him because she was already dead. She had died when her head went through the windshield.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That's what they thought at the inquest, too. Verdict of accidental death. And surely the morticians who embalmed her had no doubts, nor did the minister who preached the sermon over her casket, the workmen who lowered her body into the grave out there at Forest Hills. Donna was dead.

And now, three weeks later, Joe Elliot came to me and said, "I saw your sister. Or at least, her shadow." Hardheaded Joe, a rewrite man on the desk and cynical as they come, kissing a shadow. He had said she stood there with her arms extended and he recognized her.

Well, I hadn't seen fit to mention it, but I recognized that particular gesture from his description. Because it so happens I'd seen it myself, long before Joe Elliot came into the picture. Way back when Donna was engaged to Frankie Hankins, she used to pull the same trick with him. I wondered if Frankie had heard the news yet, over there in Japan. He'd enlisted and that broke the affair up.

Come to remember, there was another time Donna used the open-arms technique. With Gil Turner. Of course, that hadn't lasted, it was obvious from the start: Turner was just a namby-pamby. Surprised everybody to see a wishy-washy character like him pull up stakes and leave town in such a hurry.

It must have surprised Donna, too, but not for long. Because just about that time I introduced her to Joe Elliot and the heat was on.

There was no question about this being the big thing for both of them. They were engaged inside of a month, and planning to be married before the summer was out. Donna just took over, lock, stock and barrel.

Of course I'd always known my sister was a determined woman (let's face it, she made a habit of getting her own way, and she was a hellcat if you crossed her) but it was interesting to watch how she worked on Joe Elliot. Talk about Pygmalion — here was one case where Galatea reversed the play. Before anyone knew it, Joe Elliot was out of his sloppy sports jacket and into gray tweeds, out of smelly cigars and into briar pipes, out of cuppa-cawfee-'n-a-hamburger and into Donna's comfortable little apartment for regular evening meals.

Oh, she made a lot of changes in that boy! Got so that he was shaving twice a day, and he trotted around the corner to the bank with his paycheck instead of over to Smitty's Tap.

I had to give Donna credit. She knew what she wanted, and she knew just how to get it. Maybe she was ruthless, but she was feminine-ruthless. She remade Joe Elliot, but she also made him like it. He certainly didn't seem to object. I got so used to the new Elliot that I virtually forgot about the old one — the old one who used to sit in Smitty's and swear a mighty oath that the girl didn't breathe who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could ensnare him into unholy dreadlock.

By the time the wedding drew near, Donna was already openly talking about their plans for buying a house — "You can't raise a family in an apartment" — and Elliot would listen and actually grin.

("And another thing," he used to say, shaking his finger at Smitty in solemn warning, "I may be a poor downtrodden wage-slave, but you'll never catch me being a house-slave. Or turning into that typical figure of fun — the American Father. Dear Old Dad, the butt of every family radio and TV show in the country! Not for me. I believe in the old saying: children should be seen and not had.")

But this was *before* Donna. Before, I suppose, he found out how nice it is to have a woman around who lights your pipe, and straightens your tie, and fixes the fried potatoes at just the right time so they won't get soggy when the steak is served. Before he found out what it is to have somebody who holds out her arms and doesn't say anything, except with her eyes.

This much I was sure of: Donna wasn't playing any trick. She loved the guy. She died loving him, the night they were driving back from my party. That part was real.

Everything was real, up to now. Now, and Joe Elliot's story of the shadow.

I looked up at the shimmering ceiling. Somehow, here in the dark, with its mingling of moonlight, I could almost begin to believe.

Maybe we're not quite so sophisticated as we like to think we are; ghosts happen to be unfashionable, and the concept of love conquering the grave went out with *Outward Bound*. But set a sophisticate down in the pitch-black bowels of a haunted house, bar the exit, and leave him there for the night. Maybe his hair won't turn white by morning; still, there'll be some reaction. Intellectually, we reject. Emotionally, we're not so sure. Not when the chips are down and the lights are low.

Well, the lights were low and I kept waiting for Donna to come. I waited and waited, and finally I guess I just fell asleep.

I told Joe Elliot about it at lunch two days later. "She never showed."

He cocked his head at me. "Of course not," he answered. "She couldn't. She was at my place."

I finally managed to speak. "Again?"

"Two nights ago, and last night."

"Same thing?"

"Same thing." He hesitated. "Only — she stayed longer."

"How much longer?"

More than hesitation now; a lasting silence. Until he brushed his napkin from his lap, stooped down to pick it up, and barely whispered, "All night."

I didn't ask the next question. I didn't have to. One look at his face was enough.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"She's real," Elliot said. "Donna. The shadow. You remember what I said the first time? About the watered whisky?" He leaned forward. "It's not like that now. Maybe they get stronger once they break through. Do you think that's it? They learn the way, and then they get stronger."

He was close enough so that I could smell his breath, and he hadn't been drinking — any more than he'd been drinking the night of the accident. I'd testified to that; and it helped seal the verdict.

No, Elliot wasn't drunk. I wished to heaven he was, so I wouldn't have to say what I was going to say. But I had to.

"Why don't you take a run up to see Doc Foster?" I asked him.

Joe Elliot spread his palms on the table. "I knew you'd say that," he grinned. "So I already called him this morning, for an appointment."

I managed to withhold the sigh of relief, but it was there, and I could feel it. For a minute I'd been afraid of an argument — not because I dreaded arguments, but because of what it would imply about Elliot. I was glad to see he hadn't gone completely overboard.

"You needn't worry," he assured me. "I know what Doc will tell me. Sedatives, relaxation, and if that doesn't work, see a head-shrinker. And if he does, I'll follow orders."

"Promise?"

"Sure." He gave me the grin again, but this time it was a little twisted. "Want to know something funny? I'm beginning to be a bit scared of that sister of yours — even if she is only a shadow."

I put a large *No Comment* sign on my face and we went out together in silence. We separated in the street — I went back to the office and Elliot went over to Doc Foster's.

I didn't learn about his visit for several days. Because when I got back to the office they had a surprise for me.

The same newspaper employing Joe Elliot on the rewrite desk sees fit to retain me in the capacity of roving correspondent. And the M.E. was waiting for me with a suggestion that I rove in the direction of Indo-China. As of two days from now, with all watches synchronized.

I got busy. So busy that I never managed to call Joe Elliot. So busy that if he called me, I wasn't around to get the message.

He finally reached me at the airport, actually, just before I took off for the west coast and the first leg of the flight.

"Sorry I couldn't be on hand," he said. "*Bon voyage* and all that."

"You sound pretty happy."

"Why not?"

"Doc's sedatives do the trick?"

He chuckled. "Not exactly. When I told him, he didn't even bother with the first part of the routine. Sent me packing right away to the you-know-who. Name of Partridge. Heard of him?"

I had. "Good man," I said.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The best." He paused. "Well, I mustn't keep you . . ."

"You're all right?" My voice was insistent.

"Sure. I'm fine. I sailed for the works. Some of the things the guy told me make sense. I guess I'm more tangled up than I thought — oh, not just what I told you about, but there are other angles. Anyway, I'm going in to him twice a week for I don't know how long. And it's not as phony as I thought it might be, either. None of this couch business. He really gets results." Another pause. "I mean, I've been there just twice, and she's gone."

"The shadow, you mean?"

"The guilt-fantasy." He chuckled again. "See, I'm picking up the lingo already. Time you come back, I'll be ready to hang out my shingle. Well, lots of luck, kid. And keep in touch."

"Will do," I said. And hung up, listening to them announce my flight. And took the flight, and made my transfer in Frisco, and went to Manila, and went from there to Singapore, and from there to hell.

It was hot as hell in hell, and although I managed to get enough dispatches back to satisfy my M.E., I had no opportunity to keep in touch.

You know what happened in Indo-China, and when they opened a branch hell in Formosa, my M.E. sent me over there, and when hell got too hot for even a roving correspondent I was based in Manila and then Japan. I'm not trying to make a production out of it; just explaining why it turned out that I was gone for eight months instead of eight weeks.

When I got back they gave me a leave, and some information. Not much, but just enough to send me scurrying around to Joe Elliot's apartment the first opportunity I got.

I didn't waste any time on hello-how-are-you. "What's this I hear about your leaving the paper?" I began.

He shrugged. "I didn't leave. I got canned."

"Why?"

"Hitting the sauce."

He looked it, too. The sports jacket was back, and it was dirty. He wasn't bothering to shave once a day, either, let alone twice. He was thin, and twitchy.

"Let's have it," I said. "What happened with you?"

"Nothing."

"Quit stalling. What does Partridge say?"

He gave me a grin, and to say it was twisted doesn't even begin to describe it. They could have made a cast and used it to cut pretzels with.

"Partridge," he echoed. "Sit down. Have a drink."

"All right, but keep talking. I asked you a question. What does Partridge say?"

He poured for me. I was a guest; I got a glass. He gulped out of the bottle. Then he put it down. "Par-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tridge doesn't say anything any more," he told me. "Partridge is dead."

"No."

"Yes."

"When did this happen?"

"Month or so back."

"Why didn't you go to another hea — psychiatrist?"

"What? And have him jump out of the window, too?"

"What's all this about jumping out of a window?"

He picked up the bottle. "That's what I'd like to know." *Gulp.* "Personally, I'm not even sure he jumped. Maybe he was pushed."

"Are you trying to tell me —?"

"No. I'm not trying to tell you anything. Any more than I'd try to tell Doc Foster or the boys down at the office. You can't tell anyone a story like that. Just got to keep it to yourself. Yourself and the little old bottle." *Gulp.*

"But you said — I mean, you sounded as if everything was going so well."

"That's right. And it went fine. Up to a point."

"What point?"

"The point where I found out why she wasn't coming back any more." He stared out of the window, and then he went a million miles away and only his voice remained. I could hear what he said, plainly enough. Too plainly.

"She wasn't coming back to me because she was going to him. Night after night after night. Not with her arms out — not the way she'd come to me, in love. She went to him out of hate. Because she knew he was trying to drive her away. Don't you see, when he worked on me it was like . . . like exorcism. You know what exorcism is, don't you? Casting out demons. Ghosts. A succubus."

"Joe, you've got to stop this. Get hold of yourself."

He laughed. "All I can get hold of is this." And reached for the bottle, as he spoke. "You're asking me to stop this? But I didn't start it. I didn't make it up. Partridge told me himself. Finally he broke down and he *had* to tell me. Do you get the picture now? — *he* came to *me* for help. And I couldn't help him. I was getting well, there's a laugh for you, I was getting over *my* delusions. I talked to him the way you're trying to talk to me, real Dutch uncle stuff.

"And I went out of his office, and the next morning I read where he jumped. Only he didn't jump — she must have pushed him — he was afraid of her, she kept getting stronger and stronger, just as I thought she would. They found him spattered all over the sidewalk —"

This time I reached for the bottle. "So you quit your job and started drinking, just because a psychiatrist cracked up and committed suicide," I said. "Because one poor overworked guy went to pieces, you had to do likewise. I thought you were smarter than that, Joe."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"So did I." He took the bottle away from me. "You heard what I told you. I thought I was completely well. Even when he died, I still wasn't sure about some things. Until that night, when she came back."

I watched him drink and waited.

"Sure. She came back. And she's been coming back, every night, since then. I can't fight it off, I can't fight her off, she keeps clinging and clinging to me. But why try to explain? You don't believe me anyway. I saw the look on your face when I mentioned the part about a succubus."

"Please," I said. "I want to hear the rest. I've read about those things, you know. A succubus takes the form of a woman and comes to men at night —"

He was nodding and then he cut in. "So that explains it, don't you see? What she was whispering to me. I guess I didn't tell you, but she talks now. She talks to me, she tells me things. She says she's glad, and it won't be long now, then she'll have everything she wanted —"

His voice trailed off, and I stood up just in time to catch him as he slumped. He was out cold; his body was limp and light in my arms. Too light. He must have lost a lot of weight. I guess Joe Elliot had lost a lot of things.

I suppose I could have tried to bring him around, but I didn't make the effort. It seemed kinder just to carry him over to the bed, take off his things and let him rest. I found pajamas in one of the bureau drawers, got them on him — it was like dressing a rag doll instead of a man — and covered him up. Then I left him. He'd sleep now, sleep without shadows.

And while he slept, I'd figure out something. There had to be an answer. Because Donna was my sister and I'd loved her, and because Joe Elliot was my friend, there had to be an answer.

If Partridge were only alive. If I could just talk to him and find out what he'd really learned about this delusion! He must have learned something, in eight months. Even if Elliot deliberately tried to hold back, in eight months a man like Partridge would learn —

The thought hit me then; a stinging blow. I tried to duck. But it hit harder and this time there was a numbing reaction.

"No," I told myself. "No."

I kept telling myself no, but I was telling the cab-driver to take me down to the office again. I told myself no, but I told the M.E. I wanted all the stuff in the house on Partridge's suicide.

Then I was reading it, and then I was over at the Coroner's office, checking the report of the inquest.

I didn't ask any fancy questions, and I didn't do any fancy detective work. That's out of my line. I won't pretend to have done anything more except to jump at a wild conclusion. That's all the records showed —

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Partridge had jumped to a wild conclusion.

But knowing what I did, I was more inclined to agree with Joe Elliot. Partridge hadn't jumped, he'd been pushed.

There wasn't a single solitary thing I could hang onto as tangible evidence; nothing to build a case around. But I checked and rechecked, and I fitted the pieces together and then everything shattered apart when I recognized the picture.

I left the Coroner's office and went over to Smitty's Tap and drank a very late supper, not talking to anyone. I didn't know who to talk to now — surely not the Coroner, or the D.A., or the cops. They couldn't help, because I had no evidence. Besides, I owed Joe Elliot a chance.

There was still the shadow of a doubt. A *shadow* named Donna, who'd come back. Maybe she'd be coming back tonight, but I wasn't going to wait.

After a while it was quite late, but I was on my way, back to Elliot's apartment. Chances were that he was still sleeping, and I hoped so in a way. Then again, I knew I had to see him now.

I went up the stairs slowly, one voice saying *let him sleep* and the other voice saying *knock*, and the two of them fighting together, *let him sleep — knock — let him sleep — knock —*

It turned out that neither voice won, because when I got to the door, Joe Elliot opened it and looked out.

He was awake all right, and maybe he'd been back to the bottle again and maybe he hadn't: he looked as if he'd swallowed strychnine. And his voice was the voice of a man with a burned throat.

"Come in," he said. "I was just going out."

"In your pajamas?"

"I had an errand —"

"It can wait," I told him.

"Yes. It can wait." He led me inside, closed the door. "Sit down," he murmured. "I'm glad you're here."

I sat down, but I kept a grip on the arms of the chair, ready to move in a hurry if necessary. And I waited very carefully until he sat down, too, before I spoke.

"Maybe you won't be so glad when I speak my piece," I said.

"Go ahead. It doesn't matter what you say now."

"Yes it does, Joe. I want you to listen carefully. This is important."

"Nothing's important."

"We'll see. After I left you this afternoon, I did a little investigating. I went to the Coroner's office, among other things. And I agree with you now. Partridge *was* pushed out of the window."

For the first time his face showed interest. "Then I was right, wasn't I?" he began. "She did push him, you found some evidence —"

I shook my head. "I didn't find any evidence. Not any *new* evidence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I just began to check the facts and see if they fitted in with a theory of my own. They did." I spoke very slowly, very deliberately. "I checked on one particular phase of the report, Joe. The account you gave of your own movements after leaving Partridge's office the day he jumped. The whole story about not taking the elevator down because it was crowded and you were in a hurry to get to the office. And the part about not going to the office after all because you remembered you'd forgotten your hat and went back upstairs to get it. And how you came in just as they were looking out the window where Partridge had jumped.

"I read it all, Joe. I read your account of the last meeting with Partridge, how upset he seemed. Only I was a *special* reader."

He was more than interested now; he was alert.

"They tried pretty hard to break down your story, didn't they, Joe? Only they couldn't, because there was no evidence to the contrary, and what you said made sense. About how Partridge was fidgeting and nervous and kept looking out the window. About how jumpy he'd been the past few weeks. Good word, that *jumpy*. Good enough for the coroner's jury, anyway. But not good enough for me.

"Because you didn't mention anything about the shadow in your story to the jury. You told something entirely different."

He hit the arm of his chair hard. "Of course I did, man! I couldn't tell them what I told you, they'd think I was crazy."

"But you *were* crazy, Joe. Crazy enough so that your story to me makes sense. Partridge didn't jump, he was pushed — and you pushed him."

Joe Elliot made a noise in his chest. Something came out of his mouth that sounded like, "Why?"

"I wish I knew the answer to that. The real answer. All I can do is guess. And my guess is that there wasn't anything to this story of yours about Partridge being afraid of a shadow. My guess is that *you* were the one who was afraid — because in session after session, Partridge kept getting nearer and nearer to something you didn't want him to find. Something you tried to hide, but couldn't. Something he, as a trained analyst, found anyway. Or was on the very verge of finding. When you realized that, you panicked — and destroyed him."

"Rave on," he said.

"All right, I will. Joe, you're not crazy. You never were. I think this is all an act. You wouldn't murder a man except for a very important reason. Whatever Partridge found out, or was about to find out, was something vitally necessary for you to conceal."

"Such as?"

"Such as the fact that you killed my sister."

The words hit the wall and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bounced. The words hit his face and twisted it up into the gargoyle grin, the spasmodic twitch.

"All right. So you know."

"Then it's true," I said.

"Of course it's true. But what you don't know is *why*. You wouldn't know, and you're her own brother. How could I expect anyone else to understand if you never saw it? What Donna was *really* like, I mean. The way she tried to fasten her claws into me, pulling me down, trying to possess me, never letting go for an instant. Sure I loved her, she knew how to make a man love her, she had a thousand tricks to drive you mad with wanting her, holding out her arms was just the beginning. But that wasn't enough, to possess me that way. She had to have *everything*, she wanted every minute, every movement, every thought. She was making me over and trying to turn me into all the things I always hated. I could see it, I knew what lay ahead, a life of slavery to *her* house and *her* kids and *her* future."

He stopped because he had to, and I said, "Why didn't you get out, then? Break the engagement?"

"I tried. Don't you think I tried? But she wouldn't let go. Not her, not Donna. Even then she was a succubus. She had her claws in me and she wanted to drain me. I can't help it; there was something about her, and when she came into my arms I couldn't break free because then I didn't want to any more.

"But when I was alone again, I wanted to. You never heard about this part, but just before your party, I tried to sneak out of town. She caught me. There was a scene — or there would have been, except that Donna never made scenes. She made love. Do you understand?"

I nodded.

"And after that I was sick. Not physically sick, but worse than that. Because I knew it would always be this way: me trying to get free and her clawing me back. There'd always be a succubus. Unless I got rid of her."

Another pause, another breath, and then he rushed on. "It wasn't difficult. I knew the spot on the road where the rail hung over the edge of the ravine. I had a wrench in the car. You remember we left late, and the road was deserted. When we got to the ravine I suggested we park and look at the moon. Donna liked that kind of suggestion. So then I — I hit her. And sent the car over. And went down myself, and finished cracking the windshield and gave myself a gash in the forehead and crawled into the car. I didn't have to do much pretending about the shock. Only it was a shock of relief, because I knew now she was really dead."

I put my hands in my lap. "And that's what Partridge was on the verge of finding out, isn't it?" I asked. "All this business about the shadow was just what he told you it was — a guilt-fantasy. You felt com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pelled to spring it on me first because of the guilt-feeling, and you didn't want to tell Partridge anything about the possible cause of the delusion. Only he kept probing until he was too close for safety. Your safety, and his. So you killed again."

"No."

"Why bother to deny it? You've already confessed to one murder, so —"

"Killing Donna wasn't murder," he said. "It was self-defense. And that's the end of it. I didn't kill Partridge, no matter what you think. *She* did.

"I told you how she went to him night after night, torturing him, breaking him down, trying to get him to the point where he was ready to jump.

"And when he told me, that day in his office, I couldn't stand it. So I got ready to explain, I was going to tell him the truth about the shadow and what I'd done.

"I remember he was bending over me, asking me about the accident, and then he straightened up and looked surprised and I saw that *she* was there. A shadow, but not a shadow on the wall. A shadow in the room, right beside us, tugging at his arm. And he tried to scream but there was this blackness over his mouth, her hand, and she was pulling him over to the window, and his feet made little scuffing noises sliding along the carpet, and he tried to grab the window frame but the shadow is strong and the shadow laughed so you could hear it above the scream when he went down and down and down —"

He snapped out of it suddenly. "Too bad you weren't here earlier tonight. You'd have believed me then, because you would have seen her. She came a while before you arrived and woke me. Said she wanted me to go out there, because there was a surprise. Something to show me. At first I didn't know what she was hinting at, but I know now. You see, I counted back, but you'd only laugh. I could take you along to look, too, but you'd laugh and —"

"I'm not laughing, Joe," I said.

"Well, you'd better not. She wouldn't like that. She wouldn't like to have anyone get in her way. And she's so strong now, stronger than anyone. She's already proved that. I'm going to do what she says. Now that she has a real claim on me, nothing can stop her."

I stood up. "But she can be stopped. There's a way, you know."

"You mean you believe in exorcism now?"

"Joe," I said, "you're partially exorcised already. By confessing to me you've rid yourself of a portion of her power. You might have banished her forever if you'd succeeded in telling Partridge the truth, because he represented authority to you. That's the answer, Joe. You've got to tell this to an authority. Then there won't be any more guilt-feelings or guilt-fantasy, either. You'll

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remember what actually happened to Partridge, and once they understand the situation you can put in a plea. I'll help you all I can. There's a pretty smart lawyer downtown who —"

Now Elliot stood up. "I get it," he murmured. "You're humoring me because I'm a psycho and that's what you want them all to think. Maybe you're afraid she'll be coming after you, too. Well, don't worry. She won't, unless you try to stand in her way. I'm the one she really wants, and I'm going to her. I want to see —"

"Listen, Joe," I began, but he wasn't listening.

He reached out suddenly and his hand swept across the tabletop, gripped the half-empty bottle, raised it, and smashed it down until it shattered. Then he took a quick step forward, swinging the glittering weapon.

The whole operation from start to finish was almost instantaneous, and it silenced me.

He stood there, holding the jagged length of glass that splintered down from the broken bottletop.

"Sorry to cut you off," he said. "Now you'd better go. Before I really cut you off."

I took one step forward. The gargoyle grin returned to his face, and I took two steps backward.

"I'm the one she wants," he said. "You can't stop me. And no sense going to the cops. They can't stop me, either. She won't let them."

I should have jumped him then, even though he was a maniac with a broken bottle in his hand for a weapon. I often wonder what would have happened if I *had* jumped him.

But I didn't.

I turned and ran, ran out of the apartment and down the stairs and through the hall and into the street, and I kept telling myself it wasn't just because I was afraid. I had to find help, this was a job for the police.

There was a call-box two blocks down and around the corner, and I used it. I suppose it didn't take more than five minutes between the time I left the apartment and the time I got back to meet the squad car as it pulled up.

That was enough, however. Joe Elliot had disappeared. They sent out a prowl, and they put it on the police broadcast band, and you'd think a pajama-clad man would be easy to spot on a deserted city street.

But it wasn't until I broke down and told them where I thought Joe Elliot was headed for that we got any action — and then it was because we piled into the squad car and drove all the way out to Forest Hills.

He couldn't have made the trip out there in that time on foot. He must have stolen a car, although they never found one or heard a report of a missing vehicle.

But he was there, of course, lying across her grave. And he'd been digging long enough to claw down a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

good six inches through the thick turf and solid soil.

That's when the stroke must have hit him. They never did agree as to the exact cause. The point is, he was dead.

And that left me to answer the questions.

I tried.

I tried to answer questions, and at the same time to leave out all the crazy stuff, the unfashionable stuff about ghosts and shadows and a succubus that kept getting stronger and stronger. *They* brought up the idea of a love reaching past the grave; it was their own idea, only of course they thought *he* was trying to reach *her*.

I tried to keep the murder part out of it too — because there was no sense opening that up now.

But they were the ones who finally got around to it, and they opened it up. The case, I mean. And then the grave.

They dug down the rest of the way through the thick turf and solid soil; dug down to what hadn't been disturbed for ten long months.

And they found her, all right, although there were no marks or anything to prove murder. No proof at all.

And there was no explanation for what else they found, either. The tiny body of a newborn infant in Donna's intact coffin — lying there just as dead as Donna was.

Or just as alive.

I can't make up my mind which is which any more. And of course the police keep asking me questions for which there are no answers. None that they'd believe.

I can't tell them Donna wanted Joe so badly even death couldn't deny her. I can't tell them she came to him at the last and summoned him proudly, that he went out to Forest Hills to see their child.

Because there is no such thing as a succubus. And a shadow does not speak, or move, or hold out its arms.

Or *does* it?

I don't know. I just lie in bed at night, now, when the bottle is empty, and look up at the ceiling. Waiting. Maybe I'll see a shadow. Or shadows.

Note:

If you enjoy THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, you will like some of the other MERCURY PUBLICATIONS:

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
MERCURY MYSTERY BOOK-MAGAZINE
BESTSELLER MYSTERY BOOKS
JONATHAN PRESS MYSTERY BOOKS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If you read Too Many Bears *(F&SF, September, 1955), you know that Eric St. Clair has a singular way with bears. If not, you may start in with this tale of a bear, a rabbit, a fire engine and a mad streetcar, and learn the imaginative charm of Mr. St. Clair's ursine fables — and their delightful relationship to human foibles.*

The Motorman's Glove

by ERIC ST. CLAIR

THERE WAS A BEAR WHO LIVED IN a zoo near the edge of the city. He loved to hear fire engines go past, but he had never seen one. "They must be big and beautiful," he told himself. "They must shine like gold." Then he would sigh. Never to have seen a fire engine; how sad life is, how empty.

But he did not give up hoping.

One day while the bear was snuffing his way around the bars of his cage he made an important discovery. The door was unlocked. The man who had brought him his supper had forgotten to fasten the padlock.

"How thoughtful!" exclaimed the bear. "They mean for me to see a fire engine. They want me to be happy."

Still, though, he waited until after dark. Then he softly pushed the door open with his nose. No one was in sight.

It was not until he had ambled through the big stone entrance to the zoo and was standing on the sidewalk outside that the horrid thought struck him. Suppose no fire engine should come by? He shivered, and peered up and down the street. It was too dark to see well, but a little spot of light far off seemed to be moving toward him.

It came closer, and the bear's heart beat faster. "It is a fire engine," he told himself hopefully. "It must be; I can hear it clang, and I can hear it roar." He wriggled with excitement. A real fire engine — at last!

Just then a big dusty rabbit loped into view, his tongue hanging out. "Run for your life!" the rabbit panted. He skidded to a stop alongside the bear. "The mad streetcar is coming!"

"What did you say?" asked the bear, his mind still on fire engines.

"I said, 'Run for —' " The rabbit stopped, and peered closer at the

© 1949 by G. A. PFLAUM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bear through the darkness. "A bear!" he shouted joyfully. "Just what we need! Here, put this on; it's too big for me."

The bear gazed up the street. Would that fire engine never get here? "How's that?" he enquired absently.

"Oh, don't ask so many questions! We haven't time. Here, hold your front paw out." The bear obediently held out his paw, though he stole a glance up the street. The glow of light was closer; the clang and roar were louder.

The rabbit pushed a dirty brown glove on the bear's paw, then sat back and sighed with a great relief. "That's the Motorman's Glove," he explained. "Now that mad streetcar can't hurt us."

The streetcar rolled crazily into view, pitching and tossing. It was plainly not in its right mind. "Is *that* a fire engine?" the bear whispered in disappointment. "Well, I must say . . ."

One wheel was missing from the car. The lights inside flashed off and on, and it kept biting at itself with the front cowcatcher. Its bell clanged all the time, loud, and out of tune. The car came to a crouch before them, its motors growling and grinding, while sparks shot from its wheels.

"A fire engine," said the bear doubtfully. "May I touch it?"

"Watch yourself!" the rabbit warned. "It bites. That's no fire engine. It's a streetcar, and it's out of its mind; it's wild, and it's crazy. But you're wearing the Motorman's Glove now — you can tame it."

"Can I?" asked the bear. The mad car shook itself, and rumbled while its trolley beat upon the roof.

"You can," the rabbit said. "Just go up and tame it; stare it right in the eye. The Motorman's Glove is strong magic. You are wearing it, and as long as you wear it you are the master of all metal and machinery."

So the bear stared the streetcar right in its big glaring headlight eye. His fur tingled as the magic of the Glove flowed through him. "I am the master of machinery," he told himself bravely.

Then the glare faded from the headlight. The motors stopped their growling. The lights inside the car stayed lit; no more sparks shot from the wheels. The cowcatcher chomped weakly once or twice at the bear — and then, all at once, the car was tame again. The bear had mastered the mad streetcar.

"And it really isn't a fire engine at all?" the bear asked. "Nothing like a fire engine?"

"No question of it," replied the rabbit. "It is only a streetcar. They go crazy like that sometimes when the Glove gets lost. Everybody has been looking for it; I only found it tonight — and not a minute too soon. Once a streetcar goes mad . . ." He shook his head soberly.

The bear sighed. Where do the fire engines live? he thought. How

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can I get to see one? Why, he whispered, "I don't even know what a fire engine looks like! I *wish* one would come here, right here, this minute!"

"And now," said the rabbit, "if you will just give me the Glove I'll take it back to the car barn where it belongs. The — Say! Where did that fire engine come from?"

A beautiful and proud fire engine had just rolled to a stop beside the tamed streetcar. It was red, more bright than anything the bear could think of, and the brass trimmings shone like pure gold. In the empty driver's seat lay a broad-brimmed fireman's hat, extra large in size, and with holes cut out for ears.

The bear shuffled his feet and grinned sheepishly. "I must have made a mistake," he stammered. "I must have called it with the power of the Glove. But as long as it is here . . . LET'S HAVE A RIDE!" he shouted, and leaped into the seat. He jammed the fireman's hat on his head, and started the engine with a roar.

The rabbit hopped in after him, grinning with delight. "You're wearing the magic Glove!" he shouted over the din. "You're the boss — only don't be too long!"

So the bear drove the big red fire engine all through the dark city streets. The bell clanged, the engine boomed and roared, the wind whistled through his fur. He was the happiest bear alive.

At last the rabbit touched him on the arm. "I'm sleepy," he apologized. "I've had a hard day, and I still have to return the Glove. Let's go back."

The bear now knew just what he was going to do. He drove back, roaring and booming and clanging, to the zoo. He did not stop at the gates; he just slowed up. Then he drove slowly through the gates, along the walk between the animals' cages, to his own cage. Then he stopped.

"I'm a master of metal?" he asked. "I can do anything with metal and machinery?"

The rabbit nodded. He was by now too sleepy to talk. He wanted to go to bed.

"I'm a master of machinery," whispered the bear with determination. He wheeled the fire engine around, and drove right toward the bars on the front of his cage. "I can do anything with metal!" he said through set teeth. Then he drove the fire engine through the bars of his cage.

The bars melted away before him; the Glove's magic was strong. Before he knew it, the fire engine was safe inside his cage — and the bars still stood outside, as solid as ever.

The rabbit's head lay over on one side. He was sound asleep; the day had been too much for him. The bear patted his head until he awoke. "Wha wha?" said the rabbit sleepily. One ear hung straight down.

"Wake up," said the bear. "Here's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Glove, and many thanks for lending it to me."

The rabbit took the glove. "Thank *you* for taming the . . . whaaaaa hooo!" He yawned widely, and hopped away through the bars of the cage.

The rest of the night the bear spent perched in the seat of his fire engine. He could not sleep. "*Clang clang clang*," he whispered to himself, all night.

There was quite a bit of excitement next morning in the zoo.

"I admit I left the door unlocked . . ." said the keeper. "How did that fire engine get in there through that little door?" asked the Head Keeper. "Where did it come from?" asked the Fire Chief. "There's no fire engine missing." "How can we get it out again?" asked the Chief of Police. They all talked at once, asking their questions.

But nobody could answer the questions.

The bear sat in his fire engine, wearing his fireman's hat with the holes cut for his ears, not listening to the argument. "*Clang clang clang*," he said to himself, grinning.

At last the people outside the cage decided it would be more trouble than it was worth to take the fire engine all to pieces to get it out. Besides, they had no idea where it had come from or whom it belonged to.

As the keeper pointed out, "Not every zoo has a captive fire engine in a cage. Think of the people who will come to see it!" He liked the bear and enjoyed seeing him happy.

So the bear got to keep his fire engine. On Sundays when everyone comes to the zoo he sits crouched over in the driver's seat, wearing his fireman hat. "CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!" You can hear the gong all over the zoo.

Every Saturday he washes and polishes his fire engine, so that it shines as it never shone before.

And the bear grins day and night.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tom Godwin's The Cold Equations (Astounding, *August, 1954*) *was probably the most discussed science fiction story of the year, and was promptly anthologized in the annual Dikty* BEST *and even cited by Martha Foley in her list of "distinctive" stories. The harshly uncompromising fact-facing of that story may stem from Mr. Godwin's 40 years of life in the deserts of Wyoming, Arizona and Nevada, where his only companion (not counting coyotes and rattlers) is a twelve-year-old tomcat. This Godwin debut in F&SF (typed with one hand because the tom had accidentally chewed up the other) seems at first glance a cry of lightyears from the hard spatial realism of a weathered prospector — just a light fun-and-games satire about an operatic and hyperesthetic alien culture. But Lieutenant Drake of the Space Patrol found, in the long run, that there was nothing comic about*

Operation Opera

by TOM GODWIN

LIEUTENANT DRAKE'S SPACE PATROL scoutship sat by the alien city's ornamental park, inclosing him in temporary safety as the purple-skinned natives of Geffon gathered outside it. They waited silently for him to emerge, for the time being making no hostile moves, and he drew what comfort he could from the fact that Missionary Proctor had still been sane when he reported them to be a friendly race. It was small comfort; Proctor had not known them very well at that time. . . .

The communicator rattled and the voice of his temporary superior on Earth, Supervisor Haffey of the Extraterrestrial Cultural Advancement Bureau, spoke to him:

"Are you ready to leave your ship?"

"Yes, sir," Drake replied without enthusiasm. "There are now about a hundred of them out there waiting for me."

"You will proceed with caution," Supervisor Haffey said. "You saw what happened to Missionary Proctor."

Drake recalled the way Proctor's gibbering screams had echoed down the hospital's corridors and said, "Yes, sir — I saw."

"Field Missionary Proctor was one of our most competent and ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perienced men, yet something horrible happened to him on Geffon. We have no clue as to its nature. His first report was: 'The natives are very friendly and intelligent.' He was shown their city, attended many of their theatrical performances, and said of them: 'They are a splendid race, gentle, and trying hard to improve themselves. They need only the guiding hand of the Extraterrestrial Cultural Advancement Bureau to lead them upward to our own intellectual and spiritual heights.'

"Then, one night, he reported: 'I was deeply touched today; I was made a full-fledged citizen of Geffon.' That was the last report he ever made. His ship was found a week later in a cabbage patch just outside Helltown, Zimmerman V, and he was finally located in one of the Helltown saloons, laughing hysterically and repeating over and over: 'Oh, my pretty little crown of flowers!' Occasionally he would stop laughing, say '*Urk moom bug oogle* — THUNK!' and begin screaming in terror.

"It is your job to discover what it was on Geffon that transformed Missionary Proctor into a madman. You will leave your ship now and make contact with the natives, proceeding with as much caution as possible."

"Yes, sir."

At close range the Geffonese were grotesquely goblin-like humanoids: purple-skinned, with bald heads shading to pale lavender on top; bulbous-nosed, with huge and wobbly ears. But their eyes were brown and soft and intelligent.

Two of the natives stepped forward and the larger of the two said:

"We are delighted to welcome you officially to the world of Geffon. I am Goff, and he" — Goff indicated his companion, whose gentle brown eyes seemed to have a perpetually sad and dreamy look — "is Fuzzin."

"Thank you," Drake said, and added quite honestly, "I was hoping I would be welcomed in a friendly manner."

"But how else would one welcome a stranger?" Goff asked.

"Yes, how else?" the dreamy-eyed Fuzzin asked. He sighed wistfully. "We have so few visitors and we always try so hard to make them welcome, but they never seem to want to stay."

Drake concluded his report to Supervisor Haffey that night:

"I was never treated with such friendliness in my life. I met dozens of the natives and they were all equally friendly."

"Just as Missionary Proctor described them," Haffey said. "Did they mention his name to you?"

"No, sir."

"Did you put out any — ah — feeler questions?"

"Not yet. I don't want to be too hasty about asking them what happened to Proctor — they might de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cide to show me instead of just telling me."

The succeeding days brought no clue to indicate what had turned Missionary Proctor into a madman. Drake was taken on tours of the multitude of landscaped city parks, shown through scores of art galleries, invited daily to attend gatherings where a nauseatingly sweet lavender fruit juice in fragile little cups was always served, together with equally sweet pink cakes, and where art, music, poetry and the opera were invariably the topics of conversation. He did as best he could to simulate a deep interest in Art and waited hopefully for some mention of Missionary Proctor.

But none ever came and on the fifth day, while drinking the lavender fruit juice as a guest of Goff and Fuzzin, he decided Proctor's fate could not be much worse than returning to his ship each night pale and sick from drinking the equivalent of a quart of syrup.

"By the way," he said to Goff, "you never did tell me how you happened to know the Terran language."

A strange expression passed across the faces of Goff and Fuzzin.

"Ah — there was an Earthman here a short time ago," Goff said.

"Oh? Did he stay very long?"

"No," Fuzzin answered, a note of sadness in his voice. "He left very suddenly one night."

Drake would have continued the line of questioning but Goff abruptly changed the subject. Halfway through the sixth cup of lavender syrup, Drake asked the other question:

"What does '*Urk moom-bug oogle*' mean?"

"Freely translated, it would be: '*My heart is a sad, pale petal,*' Goff answered. "It is an expression often used in our poems and songs."

"And what does the word 'THUNK!' mean?"

" 'THUNK'?" Goff blinked in surprise. "There is no such word."

Drake lay awake a long time that night thinking of Missionary Proctor saying, 'My heart is a sad, pale petal — THUNK!' and then screaming with terror.

It refused to make sense.

The next day he was invited to attend the opera in the theater managed by Goff and Fuzzin.

"Our theaters are our supreme pride," Goff said, "and we saved them for the climax of your tour of our city. You will greatly enjoy our operas."

"Yes." Fuzzin nodded in agreement until his ears bobbled. "We are a race of artists, poets and musicians and the theater is an essential medium of expression for us. You will find attending one of our operas an experience infinitely delightful and soul-stirring."

"I'm sure I will," Drake said, trying to sound more convinced than he felt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The theater was already packed when Drake arrived. Fuzzin took him in charge and led him to the front row of the many rows of wooden seats. Fuzzin asked proudly, when they had seated themselves, "Is it not a splendid theater, Lieutenant Drake?"

"Beautiful — wonderful," he answered politely. "But don't you ever use cushions in your theater seats?"

"Cushions?" Fuzzin asked in surprise. "Our theatrical performances are for the elevation and inspiration of the soul, not for the pampering of the mortal flesh."

"Oh — of course," Drake agreed, twisting on the hard seat in a futile attempt to pamper his mortal flesh.

He sat on the rock-hard seat for four hours without moving. A bull-necked basso with a garland of pink flowers around his neck rumbled and bellowed endlessly while a siren-voiced over-padded soprano shrieked back at him. In the end the basso bellowed his last and fell ponderously to the floor at the feet of the heroine amid a shower of white petals from some source above the stage. The curtain went down and Fuzzin sniffed loudly, wiping at his eyes. Drake could hear sniffling sounds all through the audience behind him.

"He died for Art and Beauty," Fuzzin explained, sniffling again. "Was it not a superlatively splendid and sad performance, Lieutenant Drake?"

Drake rose to his feet and immediately dropped to the floor as his legs, from which the hard seat had cut off the circulation for four hours, collapsed under him.

"Yes," he agreed, reaching up for the edge of the seat. "I never had such a sad experience in my life."

He attended two more of the operas on following nights. Fuzzin explained them as they proceeded and Drake found them all to be amazingly similar. In the first one, the basso had been a struggling young artist who had painted a masterpiece but for the touch of one final bit of color — a color he eventually found, too late, in the pink of the flowers around his neck. The second opera concerned a struggling young musician who had composed a masterpiece but for the final chord — a chord he found, after four hours of bellowing despairingly, in the song of a bird. The third opera was again about a struggling young artist, who ultimately found the color he sought in a rainbow. . . .

On the seventh day of his stay in Geffon, he was invited to a much larger gathering than usual. Goff made a speech in which he extolled Drake as "a man of moral virtue with aspirations toward even loftier ideals — aspirations which it is our duty to help him achieve . . ." and ended with the announcement, "Therefore, it is with great pleasure we hereby proclaim Lieutenant Drake a citizen of Geffon."

Drake made a suitably grateful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reply, surprised to see that the eyes of many of the Geffonese present were dewy with tears of sentiment.

Goff handed him a thick volume entitled *The Code Of Truth And Beauty*. "This is our philosophy, our way of life," Goff said. "It was translated into Terran especially for you. May it lead you ever upward. May the future bring many more warm and intimate relations with Earth. We shall consider it both a joy and our duty to give all Earthmen the advantage of our philosophy and our high intellectual and spiritual ideals."

He endured the fourth opera that night — one concerning a struggling young poet who had composed a masterpiece but for the final rhyming word — and glanced at the book when he returned to his ship. It seemed to consist entirely of meaningless phrases: *In the mortal climb toward the Higher Planes will come refinement of soul. . . . One must express one's adoration for Truth and Beauty that one may know the joy and glory that is the Afterlife in the Realm of Infinite Beauty. . . .*

He sighed, shook his head, and went to the communicator to make his nightly report to Supervisor Haffey.

"I still don't know what happened to Proctor," he concluded, "unless he went nuts from having to watch their operas."

"Nonsense!" Haffey said firmly. "Missionary Proctor was himself a talented poet and artist; he was a refined and cultured man and his reactions to the operas would have been entirely different to your own. He enjoyed them.

"You have been making no progress whatever. Now that you have the rights and privileges of any other Geffonese citizen, you can make a tour of the city tomorrow, taking the 3-D scanner with you. Perhaps I can get a clue of some kind from the scenes you transmit to Earth."

"Yes, sir. I'll do that."

He switched off the communicator and turned away, whistling absently and thinking about a sandwich before going to bed. He stopped whistling as a thought came to him.

It had been on the day he was made a citizen of Geffon that Missionary Proctor had given his last report.

He roamed the city the next day, the 3-D scanner in his hand. There was little or nothing of interest but he diligently viewed it all.

It was evening when he saw the swimming pool in the distance. So far as he could make out, several nude or nearly nude females were posing for a group of artists. He had let the scanner observe the scene for some time when he heard the sound of quick heavy footsteps behind him. He turned to see two young and exceptionally muscular Geffonese hurrying toward him. They seemed unduly grim for some unknown reason.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They stopped before him and one of them said, "You will please go with us to the theater. At once."

They took him into the main corridor of the theater, then up a side corridor to Goff's and Fuzzin's office, just off the stage. An invisible orchestra was playing and there was the usual bellowing of a basso and shrieking of a soprano.

"Ah, splendid!" Goff greeted him. "Rehearsal is already well under way. Please be seated there where you can watch the stage."

He sighed resignedly and seated himself. The stage was brightly illuminated, with something that vaguely resembled a butcher's block set in the middle of it. The basso was bellowing across it to a robust soprano.

"We selected one of the standard Final Performance classics," Goff said. "We had so little time, but we feel sure you will be pleased with the way we fitted your role into it."

"*My* role?" He shifted in his chair agitatedly. "I'm honored, but I have to get back to the ship. I left the workensnortzel turned on and —"

"Lieutenant Drake! As a citizen of Geffon, you know that refusal to act in one's Final Performance is unheard of."

He saw that the two burly young Geffonese were standing just behind his chair, watching him significantly. He decided refusal would remain unheard of and sighed again.

"This play will precede the regular nightly opera, with your own role very short and dramatic," Goff said. "And you have been highly honored: those two are none other than the great basso, Trimo, and the peerless soprano, Prilla."

"Ah — Lieutenant Drake!" Fuzzin bustled up, smiling in a friendly, preoccupied manner. "The play is approaching the time for your entrance cue. Please listen carefully:

"Trimo is a struggling young artist who has painted a masterpiece . . . but for the final touch of color." Drake shuddered violently but Fuzzin seemed not to notice. "If his painting wins the art award, the beautiful Prilla will marry him. But he cannot find the color he needs for the finishing touch and he is singing to Prilla now of his despair."

Trimo's song ended and the music changed to a slow and measured beat of basses.

"Then *you* appear, the Earthman who comes from another star. You walk to Trimo and Prilla in time with the music and kneel before the block." Trimo and Prilla began singing again. "They greet you with song and friendship and Trimo tells you of his problem. Prilla tells Trimo that perhaps in this friend from another star he can find the color he seeks. . . . Now, you lay yourself across the block with your chin just over the edge of it and . . ."

Prilla whipped a long broad two-handed sword from behind her — an action so unexpected that Drake jerked in surprise. She handed it to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trimo, who accepted it with a glad rumble. He brought it up and down in a mighty swing, to bury it half its own broad width in the block. The music climbed toward a climactic crescendo, fast and gay, and Prilla's shrieking was ecstatic as it blended in with Trimo's jubilant bellowing.

Fuzzin smiled benignly at Trimo and Prilla as the curtain dropped. "Was it not a superlatively inspiring adaptation for your Final Performance, Lieutenant Drake? You gladly offered up your life to help them and now his painting will win the art award."

"Oh?" Drake asked vaguely.

"Yes. He finds the color he seeks when he beheads you and your bright red blood spews forth —"

"Blood?" Drake jerked again. "*Blood?*"

He tried to jump to his feet and the hamlike hands of the guards pressed him back down into his chair. His voice changed to a choked gurgle. "Are you serious — is that gorilla supposed to chop off my head?"

Goff answered, "Ah . . . yes."

Drake made another futile attempt to get out of the chair. "What kind of insanity is this?"

Goff primly fitted his fingertips together. "Today you transmitted to Earth views of the Fragile Flower Swimming Pool, views showing the nudes who were posing for the artists. Thus you are guilty of the crime and sin of pornography. In accepting the rights and privileges of Geffonese citizenship, you made yourself subject to the high moral code of the Geffonese. A condition of mortal sin cannot be tolerated. It states very clearly on page one hundred and ninety-seven of *The Code Of Truth And Beauty:* 'The Final Performance shall cleanse the sullied soul and liberate it into the Realm of Infinite Beauty.'"

"But the artists — *they* were painting the nudes at close range," Drake protested.

"That was different," Goff said. "The artist draws Inspiration from the nude model. Into his work goes his love for Beauty, his very soul. Your scanning machine had no soul, no love for Beauty. It merely reproduced for the ogling eyes of those who do not appreciate True Art."

"Ogling?" Drake choked. "Who would want to ogle one of your bat-eared, tomato-nosed female goblins? Besides —"

He stopped as memory of the four words of Trimo's song that had preceded the THUNK! of the sword flashed suddenly into his mind. The words had been *Urk moom bug oogle.*

"So you were going to murder Proctor too?" he asked.

"Ah . . . Missionary Proctor was to have made a Final Performance," Goff said. "He behaved in a most undignified manner — instead of going on stage when his entrance cue came, he ran from the theater and to his ship. We did not want to embarrass you by telling you of his disgraceful and un-Geffonese action."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What was *his* crime and sin?"

"On the day following his acceptance of Geffonese citizenship, Missionary Proctor invited a group of young men and women from the Budding Flower Art and Poetry Club. He then served them with what he called '*tea and cookies.*' There was no way, of course, that these innocent young men and women could know that the *tea* was a powerful intoxicant. They drank it and all their senses of the higher and finer things in life were subdued and overridden by animal passions. When the noise brought others of us to the ship, we found these young men and women in an uproar of laughter as they exchanged intimate and significant remarks about" — Goff almost whispered the word — "*sex!*"

"At first we held Missionary Proctor in such high esteem. He seemed to be trying hard to improve himself and we were sure he needed only the helping hand of the Geffonese to lead him upward. It was such a disappointment to us that he should do a thing so *vulgar.*"

"He claimed there was a difference between Terran and Geffonese metabolism," Fuzzin said, "and that *tea* was not an intoxicating aphrodisiac to Terrans. But it was such a *shocking* crime and —"

A whistle blew from somewhere offstage and Goff said, "I'll have to ask you to please excuse me, Lieutenant Drake. If I don't have time to remind you before you go on stage: Remember to have your *right* profile turned to the audience when you lay yourself across the block."

He hurried away and Drake scowled savagely at his retreating back. A Geffonese stagehand appeared, a large basket on his arm, and his scowl faded as he wondered sickly if the basket would be used to carry out his head. But the stagehand began strewing flowers from the basket, starting at the block and making a carpet of flowers almost to where Drake sat. He handed Fuzzin a wreath made of pink blossoms before leaving.

Fuzzin sniffed the wreath appreciatively. "Is it not delicately beautiful?" he asked. "It is your tiara."

"My what?"

"Your tiara — your crown of flowers. It is symbolic of the Supreme Transition and you will wear it as you walk the carpet of flowers to the block."

"Like hell I will!"

"But you must. It is always the custom." Fuzzin placed the wreath over Drake's head and pulled it down tightly. "Is that comfortable?"

"No. It sticks and itches."

"I'm sorry, but your crown must be closefitting like that or it might fall off into the basin in advance of your head."

Drake gulped, a gulp that was drowned by the opening chord of the hidden orchestra. The curtain went up and Trimo burst into rumbling song. Prilla faced him across the block, keeping the long sword

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hidden behind her until Trimo should have need for it. Drake looked about him for some hope of escape but there was none. The guards still held him by the shoulders in vise-like grips and their hands tightened suggestively whenever he made a movement.

He spoke to Fuzzin. "Are you sure there's nothing on the ship you might want? You can have anything — just leave me a drive in it."

"What?" Fuzzin asked absently, his eyes on Trimo.

He raised his voice. "I said —"

"Quiet — please!" Fuzzin cautioned. "Trimo is singing."

"Nothing could ever dent that racket. Just tell me if —"

"*Quiet!*" Fuzzin repeated. "Listen to Trimo — this is a very beautiful passage in his song of despair."

Drake groaned impotently and listened. The minutes went by and he wiped sweat from his forehead at more frequent intervals. At last, Fuzzin spoke again: "Now it is almost time for your own entrance. Is everything satisfactory?" Drake glared and Fuzzin amended hastily, "I mean such things as the stage lighting?"

Drake looked longingly at the corridor door without answering. It was no more than ten feet away and only Fuzzin stood between him and it. But the heavy hands of the guards still gripped his shoulders. . . .

Trimo's song came to an end and the music changed to the measured beat of the basses.

"*Now!*" Fuzzin said.

The hands on his shoulders relaxed their grip and he stood up. Trimo and Prilla were looking expectantly toward him and it seemed to him he could hear a sigh of anticipation run through the invisible audience. He could think of but one shadowy plan for escape and when he took the first forward step he staggered as though about to fall.

"My legs," he moaned in answer to Fuzzin's surprised and questioning look. "They went to sleep."

"Oh, good heavens — good heavens —" Fuzzin fluttered his hands in agitation. "It is considered bad taste to keep the audience waiting. Can't you walk at all, Lieutenant Drake?"

"In only a moment," he answered, staggering half a step away from the guards and kicking his legs as though to restore the circulation. "I'll be all right in a moment."

He had managed to stagger three feet away from the guards, toward the fluttering Fuzzin and the corridor door, when sudden suspicion flashed across the face of one of the guards. Drake snatched the wreath from his head as the guard made the first forward movement and flung it hard into his face. The guard yelled "*Hoom goop!*" as his face disappeared in a shower of pink petals and both guards lunged at him like a pair of charging bulls. He wheeled and caught the astonished Fuzzin in the stomach with his shoulder. Fuzzin made a shrill *ooof* sound and his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bald head struck the wall with what, to Drake, was a pleasantly solid thud.

The outstretched fingers of one of the guards brushed his shirt collar as he went through the corridor door; then he was running down it with his arms spread wide to guide him in the darkness. He came to the right-angle turn sooner than he expected and a white light exploded in his brain as his nose flattened against the wall. He lurched dizzily, with the dim light of the corridor's exit before him and the yelling of the guards close behind him. It seemed to him he could hear, above their commanding shouts and the pound of their feet, a distant, forlorn wail from Fuzzin:

"Lieutenant Drake . . . *wait!*"

The sound of his own panting was drowning out the sounds of pursuit when he reached his ship. He closed the outer door behind him, not waiting to close the inner door, and ran to the control room. He shoved down the acceleration lever the moment he was in the pilot's seat and saw what was the most beautiful sight in all his life: the world of Geffon dropping away from under his ship.

Geffon was far behind him and he was halfway through the ship's supply of grain alcohol by the time his pulse was fully back to normal and he had completed his report to Supervisor Haffey.

"So that's what happened to Proctor's plan to show the Geffonese the light," he concluded. He lowered his head to tenderly touch his swollen nose, and several stray pink petals fell from his hair and into his drink. He fished them out, resisting an urge to laugh hysterically, and said, "The Geffonese are a race of maniacs. Nobody could ever show them anything."

Supervisor Haffey sighed. "Yes, you are quite right. We had hopes of helping them upward — but they are a menace to our own culture; utterly without morals or a sense of Right and Wrong. One cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Goff and Fuzzin stood before the theater and watched the rocket trail of the ship climb faster and faster into the night sky.

"He's gone," Goff said sadly. "I don't suppose he'll ever return."

Fuzzin sighed wistfully. "They never do. We had so much to offer the people of Earth, our high ideals and gentle, noble precepts. We could have uplifted them so." He sighed again and gingerly touched the blue lump on his head. "They are so inconsiderate of others — so *barbaric*. I daresay they are insane."

"You are quite right," Goff replied. "I'm afraid that for the welfare of our own culture we must abandon our hopes of leading them upward. They are utterly without any conception of morals or sense of Right and Wrong. One cannot paint a masterpiece with daubs of mud."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recommended Reading

by ANTHONY BOUCHER

SCIENCE FICTION SUFFERED A GREAT deal in 1955, as was discussed in this column last month; but the most brutal body blow received by our genre of literature came from one of America's most influential reviewers, Virginia Kirkus — an authority of particular significance because her reviews are read primarily not by readers but by the book-trade, and thus markedly effect library purchases and bookstore stocks.

In reviewing George Adamski's INSIDE THE SPACE SHIPS (Abelard-Schuman, $3.50*), a narrative of the author's chatty visits with Martians, Venusians and Saturnians, rich in pseudoscientific gobbledygook and enough contradictions to disprove itself solely on internal evidence, Miss Kirkus writes:

"Scoffers and skeptics will have their field day, but look back at the incredulity that hailed Jules Verne, with the publication of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA — and turn to the long list of records of scientific undersea expeditions — and the latest record of scientific underwater submarines [*sic*]. I cannot question Adamski's whole-hearted and almost fanatical sincerity. . . . Whether one accepts or rejects the facts of this astonishing book, no one can read it without thoughtful weighing of its conclusions. . . . For my money, this is infinitely better reading than any science fiction."

This is indeed the ultimate insult to our field; but Kirkus is probably (as usual, which is what makes her so valuable to the trade) simply expressing the feeling of a large part of the book-reading and -buying public. For in 1955, a year of acute slump in s.f., no less than six books on saucers appeared from regular trade publishing houses (plus at least as many more from amateur or vanity firms), or nearly as many as the total (seven) previously published through 1954.

The last two of this half dozen were received here too late for 1955 review. Harold T. Wilkins' FLYING SAUCERS UNCENSORED (Citadel, $3.50*) can be dismissed briefly; it's merely 100,000 words of unfocused and undocumented ramblings on any topic conceivably related to interplanetary visitation, topheavy with an eager willingness to believe anything . . . except the claims of Adamski and other commercial rivals for the saucer market.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Major Donald E. Keyhoe's THE FLYING SAUCER CONSPIRACY (Holt, $3.50*) deserves somewhat more serious consideration. Keyhoe wrote the first and best of saucer books (THE FLYING SAUCERS ARE REAL, Gold Medal, 1950); and his publishers say, justly enough, that his "reputation for accuracy and thoroughness is unsurpassed among saucer writers" (as minimal a distinction as one can well conceive). But his books have grown progressively longer (60 to 85 to 100,000 words) and less effective, concerned not so much with the documentation and analysis of data as with the running battle between Major Keyhoe and the United States Air Force.

The official statement of the USAF's present position you'll find in this issue, starting on p. 33. And even this complete disavowal contains between the lines some indication that the question of Unidentified Aerial Objects may be important. Valid UAO sightings, if any, would inevitably be a small percentage compared to reports based on error or hysteria; if you translate the figures on p. 36 from percentages (minute) back to numbers, you'll find that the USAF acknowledges 81 wholly unaccountable UAO reports (aside from 154 more with "insufficient information") in a recent period of 28 months — *i. e.*, about once every 10 days an aerial incident in the U. S. defies the best analytical efforts of an all-out Intelligence investigation.

Keyhoe recounts the details of a number of these cases which wind up in the USAF percentages as "unknown"; but they are almost lost in pages upon pages of argumentative self-justification. The purely chronological arrangement of the book, with no index or cross-references, makes it all but valueless for checking facts and patterns; and I'd have more faith in Major Keyhoe's "accuracy and thoroughness" if he did not refer to a debatable "bridge" on the moon as "stretching above the Mare Crisium crater" (which is like saying "the California mountain") or allude to certain experts, familiar to all of you, by the strange aliases of "Wernther" von Braun, Arthur "Clark" and "Willi" Ley.

But at least Major Keyhoe avoids any trace of mysticism; he does not drag in Atlantis or the Great Pyramid; he does not lay claim to personal intimacy with radiantly beautiful extraterrestrials; he makes a reasonable effort to substantiate most of his statements; and in short, whatever its defects, his is the only one of 1955's six saucer entries which merited the imprint of any publishing house placing responsibility before opportunism.

The first s.f. novel of 1956 is a masterpiece — and one with a most curious history, sure to provoke extensive argument among readers and critics.

In 1937 Arthur C. Clarke began

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work on a short novel which was finally published in 1948 in *Startling* as AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT (hardcover edition, Gnome, 1953). As Clarke has matured as a writer, he has felt increasingly unsatisfied with that early form (excellent though it seemed to most of us at the time) until he has now, not so much revised it, as written it all over again from scratch as THE CITY AND THE STARS (Harcourt, Brace, $3.75*).

The result is over twice as long as the original and far more similar to it than the publisher's jacket copy and the author's preface might lead you to believe. It is, indeed, exactly the same story (and a grand story it is, as I think I can assume most readers of this department already know), but written by an incomparably more mature and skilled writer.

Technically there's great fascination in watching the improvements in character development, in plot motivation, in background detail, in scientific ingenuity; but the reader will hardly notice these matters of technique. Even you who know the earlier book should be captured by the spell of a masterly (and masterful) novel of the remote future which is, in breadth and depth, one of the major achievements of our field to date.

Indeed, with every new Clarke book, one is forced closer to the inescapable conclusion that the British astronomer and skindiver is the finest living writer of science fiction. He has all of Heinlein's skill at fusing scientific thought with narrative movement, and all of Bradbury's insight and sensitivity, supplying in himself the very qualities in which each of these opposed masters is deficient. Confident of Clarke's future position, not only in s.f. but in literature, one may address to him, particularly on the occasion of THE CITY AND THE STARS, the words of Wordsworth to L'Ouverture:

> . . . *Thou has great allies!*
> *Thy friends are exultations, agonies,*
> *And love, and man's unconquerable mind.*

Two 1955 novels not published as s.f. are still of strong offtrail interest to readers of F&SF. James Helvick (pseudonym of Claud Cockburn; see p. 124) has written, in OVERDRAFT ON GLORY (Lippincott, $3.95*), one of the rarest forms of science fiction. Like David Grinnell's *Extending the Holdings* (F&SF, April, 1951), which related a hitherto unknown moon-flight in the 1890's, this novel tells how a jet plane crashed in its first test on July 13, 1910 . . . and why that fact has not come down to us. The why is a matter of character, and inventor Grant Foraker — scoundrel, clown, poseur, and yet in a way believably great — is vividly and convincingly portrayed. It's a pity that Helvick-Cockburn has chosen to glide over the details of period technology, which could have been entrancing; but he has written a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

witty, adroit and gratifyingly unconventional novel. Alfred Toombs's GOOD AS GOLD (Crowell, $3.50*) has a more familiar formula: brilliant-but-innocent young scientist comes to Washington with revolutionary discovery and upsets all political applecarts. The discovery converts gold into a miraculous super-fertilizer; you can foresee some of the consequences to national and global economy, but by no means all of the outrageous results which Mr. Toombs logically evolves. The political satire is acute and much more intimately knowledgable than in most fiction; and the entire operation is good fun, especially if you're not particularly insistent on scientific plausibility.

Gordon R. Dickson's first book-length s.f., ALIEN FROM ARCTURUS (Ace, 35c), is lightweight and familiar (Terra achieving Faster-Than-Light drive to earn admission to Galactic Union), but distinguished by the delightful presence of the Alien, Panjarmeeeklotutmrp (known as Peep), a furiously gentle creature of comic dignity who somehow reminds me of Giovannetti's cartoon character Max — and reminds me too that Dickson is co-creator of the Hokas. The same Ace Double-Book contains Nick Boddie Williams' THE ATOM CURTAIN — a fact of strictly bibliographical importance. Also noted for completists only, and to clear these files: ALIEN MINDS, by E. Everett Evans (Fantasy Press, $3*); REPORT ON THE STATUS QUO, by Terence Roberts (Merlin, $2.50*); THIS FORTRESS WORLD, by James E. Gunn (Gnome, $3*).

In short stories, I discover belatedly that one of 1955's best science-fantasy volumes by an American appeared only in England: Philip K. Dick's A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS (Rich & Cowan, 10*s.* 6*d.*). Readers of F&SF, which enjoyed the honor of discovering Dick, know the freshness of his concepts, his sharp sense of unfamiliar terrors, the easy naturalism of his everyday people against strange and imaginative backgrounds. Here are 15 of his stories (3 from these pages), almost all of them ranging from good to excellent and only one previously reprinted. (I don't understand why Dick has been so neglected by anthologists . . . including, I must confess, me.) I urge readers to order the volume through book-importers — and urge American publishers to correct the local absence of a Dick collection.

F&SF didn't quite discover Robert Sheckley (we bought his *third* published story), but I've still been very gratified in watching his rise from promising amateur to polished professional. CITIZENS IN SPACE (Ballantine, $2*; paper, 35c) contains 12 Sheckley stories, mostly from *Galaxy* and all but one new to book form. If it's minutely less dazzling a collection than 1954's UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS, it still gets 1956 off to a delightful start and proves once more that no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one (save possibly the as yet uncollected Ralph Robin) is so deft as Sheckley in using interplanetary fiction as a vehicle for Gilbertian satire, topsyturvy, shrewd, and wholly captivating.

The oddest and, to the scholar, most valuable recent volume of s.f. shorts is one by I. Yefremov entitled simply STORIES (Tailer, $2.98[1]). (No nonsense about catchy selling-titles in the USSR!) Translated (surprisingly well, by O. Gorchakov) and printed in Moscow, this is the first extensive sampling of modern Soviet s.f. that I've seen. As imaginative fiction, it's astonishingly timid; though Yefremov himself describes the stories as "Soviet science-fiction," they scarcely venture beyond the bounds of the known possible, and all occur either in the present or in the recent past. At most 2 of the 8 stories are, in theme, what American readers mean by s.f. — and none are what we mean by entertainment. Yefremov has two marked virtues: an excellent feeling for remote and isolated locales, and an ability to convey the sheer excitement of scientific discovery as hardly anyone but Chad Oliver has done here. But his stories are actionless and shapeless, his characters wooden, his wordage unending. His tales are surprisingly free of political purport or propaganda — no carelessly caricatured Capitalist villians to match the tiresome Communists of American s.f. Only the last (and best) story, *Stellar Ships*, attempts overt indoctrination ("Let's convert this planet to Marxism first before tackling space") and even that story has some elements running counter to what we think of as the acceptable Russian line. In all, it's hardly a book you'd read for amusement; but it's a document of marked interest — if only to prove that, however the Russians stand in relation to us in science, they're a good 40 years behind us in science fiction.

The first of 1956's anthologies can hardly be reviewed here; but I hope you'll look into THE BEST FROM F&SF: FIFTH SERIES (Doubleday, $3.50*), which contains 15 stories, 5 vignettes and assorted verse, all previously unreprinted. In the year's second selection, SCIENCE-FICTION ADVENTURES IN MUTATION (Vanguard, $3.75*), Groff Conklin somewhat lets down the very high standards of his patterned Vanguard series. I can't blame him; most of the top notch mutant stories are familiar by now, and this group of 20 unanthologized tales is forced to include a number of second- or even third-raters. There should still be enough to interest you — if you skip fast over the duller stretches and linger on Mr. Conklin's always rewarding notes and comments.

* Books marked with an asterisk may be ordered through F&SF's Readers' Book Service. For details see p. **128.**

[1] See ad on page **127.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There's a singular lack of chauvinism in science fiction, a marked willingness on the part of (presumably) Earthly writers to depict Earth not as the beauty spot but as the pesthole of the Galaxy. In many ways this self-depreciation is healthy; but it's high time that somebody, like Richard Wilson in this story, took the theme and twisted its tail.

Don't Fence Me In

by RICHARD WILSON

HAVE ANOTHER DRINK, GYUBI. *Wooof!* I wish I had your double gullet, Pal — I'd use the lined one for pouring down this Venturan varnish of yours. If you ever get to Earth, Gyubi, you look me up. I'll buy you a real drink — something you'll want to pour down the gullet you taste with. As a matter of fact . . . but I'll get to that later. A story goes with it, as they say.

I was telling you about why we stopped building spaceships. The first one up from Earth crashed, you know. That was because when it reached The Barrier it tried to blast through it with its forward rockets. It got warned, then it went out of control. Crashed, all hands dead.

The second ship went up mad as hornets. Cautious, though. Cruised around, looking and listening. That's when they heard The Voice, the telepathic one that said nobody was to leave Earth until they said so.

The Federated Planets — we call it the Federation now — put it as tactful as they could but what they put was that us Earth people had a long way to go before we'd be worthy of traveling outside our own air. We had all those bad things they didn't want rubbing off on them. So Earth was proscribed. You know, nobody allowed in or out — especially out.

Well, you know how it is when somebody tells you you can't do something. Maybe you never cared particularly whether you did it or not, but the minute they tell you you can't, you want to, in the worst way. Like a thing we had once called Prohibition.

So we tried every way we knew to get a ship through the barrier. We tried mass breaks, hoping one of many would make it, maybe on an end run. But The Barrier was everywhere.

It wasn't a solid thing, that Bar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rier. It was like you were dropped into a life net. You'd go in a certain distance and it'd spring you back out. Hell of a sensation.

Along about that time somebody discovered invisibility, so we tried that. Sent up a spaceship disguised as an intercontinental rocket. It leveled off in a long cloudbank, then headed up. No go. It got bounced, too.

A bunch of amateurs at Woomera sent up a moon-rocket one day. An unmanned, remote-control, instrument-packed job. It got to the moon all right — through The Barrier — but nobody paid much attention. It landed nicely and sat there on the edge of Aristarchus sending back signals till the power ran out. But we knew all about the moon already and nobody wanted to go *there*. We wanted at the Federation.

Then the Asian bloc perfected telekinesis. The Anglo-Americans huffled around a bit, then ate humble pie and bought in. That was the Triple-A try — American ship, British skipper and takeoff from an Asian telekinetic field. It worked like all the others — a big flop. They aimed the thing at a point a hundred thousand miles past The Barrier. The ship disappeared from the field all right and everybody started slapping each other on the back. But a couple of minutes later there was the ship back again just where it started from, shivering a bit. The crew came out groggy, holding their heads. They didn't know what happened except they felt the same old slingshot effect of being bounced out of a net. And something extra this time. Every man-jack of them had a migraine headache that lasted a week.

Well, that was the end of it. We didn't try any more after that. We gave up. Licked.

Then how come I'm sitting here in a saloon on Ventura IV yarning about it? That's a fair question. Let's have another drink first, Gyubi, old pal, and then I'll tell you how I outsmarted you and your cronies in the Federation.

Yes, me, personally, all by my lonesome.

Well, after the Triple-A try got thrown for a loss, spaceships were a drug on the market. They put them in mothballs — saving face, you know, pretending they didn't exist. After a few years, when they got less sensitive, they put them up for sale. There weren't many takers but they were so cheap I bought one.

I was in intercontinental trade then. Telekinesis hadn't got started commercially yet. Those space jobs weren't what you'd call economical on fuel but when you converted them they held about three times as much cargo as an intercon. And they were so dirt-cheap I figured I could afford the upkeep.

I made out pretty good. Some companies shipped by me just for the prestige of having their dingbats

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and ducrots delivered by spaceship. But I always had the feeling the Federation was watching me as I baroomed back and forth across the Pacific, as if I was going to make another try at their blessed Barrier.

I always went solo. The pacer was so simple to handle I didn't need a co-pilot. And passengers were against regulations.

I'd delivered a dozen gross tons of flywheels, or mousetraps or corkscrews, I forget what, to Singapore and the customer tossed a big party which naturally I went to. It got late and I tried to ease off but when the host suggested one for the road I had to go along with it. He must have laced that one so it'd last all the way to California because when I set the autopilot for Muroc it was strictly a blind jab. Off we went, me and the spacer, *baroom.*

Well, that was it.

Next thing I knew I was out somewhere beyond Mars.

Scared the hell out of me when I came to, still boozy. The spacer was in free fall, headed clean out of the solar system, when the Federation ship came alongside. I pulled myself together as best I could. Drank a quart of milk, straightened my collar and prepared to receive boarders. Or get blasted to kingdom come.

But no. They were all kowtowy and if-you-please. I'd busted through their Barrier but they were too flamboozled to know it was an accident so they figured they were licked and offered terms. To me. As if I was the representative of Earth and this was all a carefully worked-out plan.

Of course I played along; I signed the compact that opened them up to trade. Me, an old intercon skipper, on behalf of Earth; but so hung over that only a lot of static filtered through to their mind readers.

That's all they were, Gyubi, you old barfly — mind readers and hypnotists. And that's all their barrier was, a vaudeville trick.

Sure I know you're not one of them, Gyubi. They're the robber barons and your people are the suckers, even if you are nominally members of the Federation. They had a nice racket — trade concessions on all twenty-seven inhabited planets this side of the Coal Sack — and they didn't want any of it lost to a smarter operator. That was us, on Earth, getting ready to take the giant step into space.

Naturally the Federation's mind readers didn't spot anything when I punched a leftover button on my control panel and put the ship into spacedrive. It was my finger did that, plus the one for the road; far as my mind knew, I was punching for Muroc, California.

Then by the time the spacer was headed up toward the stars it was too late. I'd passed out; and there just plain wasn't any mind for the mind readers to read or the hypnotists to toss the big Barrier whammy at.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why am I telling you all this? Well, you figure it out, Gyubi. Why are you still exploited by the Federation? Because they can read your mind — outfinagle you every single time.

What you need, Pal, is an antidote. Happens I have a sample right here. Yes, sir — Singapore Sling, bottled in the full ⅗ quart size, only ten venturas the bottle. It goes right to work building a static field no hypnotist, no mind reader can penetrate. This is the equalizer, Gyubi, the way to be as big a man as they are.

You'll take a case? Smart boy, Gyubi. You won't regret it. Look at me — a living testimonial to the way this product works.

Free Flight

The sick surmise that we should not survive
  Clouded the start. Then, with the flight begun,
We saw, in the mere flush of being alive,
  How we could be, before the thing was done,
  In our own right new subjects of the sun,
Freer than the full flight of human will.
  The old restraints of earth were on the run,
And heaven all ours to harvest. Later still

Our minds, as the extreme event drew near,
  Loosened the long links of assertiveness
    And as the irremeable line was crossed
Lost their last hold. Now without pride or fear
  We contemplate mankind's supreme success
    With the supreme detachment of the lost.

P. M. HUBBARD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Novotny's The Angry Peter Brindle *(F&SF, October, 1954) told of a man whose excesses of wrath would cause him to be abruptly teleported to remote and unexpected places. It took Maurice Renault, editor of our French edition* Fiction, *to find the obviously perfect title which had eluded both Novotny and me; in Paris the story was published as* Transports de colère — Transports of Anger. *Now Mr. Novotny presents us with another angry man, whose doom is even stranger than Peter Brindle's . . . and I wonder what precisely apt title I'm overlooking this time? The best Novotny and I can do is*

On Camera

by JOHN NOVOTNY

ROBERT MASTERS LAUGHED DERISIVELY at his wife.

"How we do run on," he snorted, tugging at the television set. "It was I who walked home twenty-two years ago. You had nearly decapitated my ear lobe with your teeth and —"

"One cannot decapitate an ear lobe," Jane Masters interrupted.

"— you were after the other one when I leaped from the car, fortunately escaping with my honor," Robert continued calmly.

"An ear lobe may be severed, but not decapitated," Jane insisted.

"What a fool I was," Robert Masters mused. "If I had only stayed in the car that night. Heaven knows what might have happened."

"Nothing would have happened," Jane smiled, "except perhaps you might have appeared before my father without any ear lobes. What are you going to do?"

"Tape them tightly to my head, naturally," Robert said easily. "Now that it's out in the open I don't intend to take any chances."

"I am referring to the television set."

"Oh." Robert grasped the set and pulled. "I'm going to fix it."

Mrs. Masters got up, walked to the writing cabinet, extracted a small notebook, and returned to the sofa. She opened the book and raised an eyebrow.

"On our first anniversary you fixed our Atwater Kent and put the entire neighborhood in darkness," she announced. "Since then you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have annihilated three electric clocks, two radios, our daughter's record player, and one vacuum cleaner. You fought a draw with the front door lock and were beaten soundly by a three-way lamp. You average four fuses just warming up a soldering iron."

"Very funny," Robert observed.

"And now you intend to louse up the television set."

"My dear," Robert sighed. "I intend to fix the television. Borrowing our daughter's college-taught English does not become you."

"Nor does getting electrocuted become you," she answered. "Each time you approach an appliance I die a little."

Robert removed the back of the set.

"You are in good form tonight," he sighed, squinting at the arrangement of tubes and wires. "Will you hand me the screwdriver?"

Jane pushed it over with the toe of her shoe.

"I suppose this makes me an accessory," she observed.

"If you wish to see Ed Sullivan tonight you will continue with the helping hand. Is it turned to CBS?"

"Yes," said Jane. Robert reached in with the screwdriver.

At that moment Ed Sullivan shrugged his shoulders, rubbed his hands, and peered out at the studio audience.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, here is someone else I would like you to meet."

With a shriek of pain and a wild grimace, Mr. Robert Masters joined Ed Sullivan on television screens across the country.

"Damn it to hell!" he roared, holding his arm and hopping around the living room. Mr. Sullivan stared with horror at the monitor. An engineer in the glassed-in control booth fainted dead away. Some television sets were snapped off quickly but a much larger number acquired new interest in their households. Mr. Sullivan moved not a muscle. This did not hold true for Mr. Masters. He moved every muscle which could be moved as he circled the living room. Once he kicked fretfully at the offending set. Another "damn!" spread over America. Jane frowned and reached out to slow him down on each trip. Robert glared at her.

"Don't you intend to use the telephone?" he asked angrily.

"I don't know if we can get a repair man at this time of—"

Robert Masters left the ground, giving many viewers the false impression that they were watching a profane, but skilful, acrobatic act.

"A doctor!" he shouted. "You could call a doctor!"

Jane looked disgusted.

"We always do," she said bluntly. "And what comes of it? Nothing. When he arrives you insist you know more than he. You fight with him. He leaves. We have all but exhausted our local supply, and I like the one we have now."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I may be dying of electrical poisoning while you ramble on," he said hoarsely. CBS trembled, spun dials, checked circuits, and prayed. Ed Sullivan retired behind his big curtain.

"I don't think it works like that," Jane disagreed. "With electricity you go quick — *poof!* — or not at all."

"Cold-blooded," Robert moaned. Many Americans sprang to their desks to write concurring letters. Others leaped to Jane's defense and dusted off old physics books for reliable quotations. By this time CBS had a turntable spinning and a stack of records waiting in another studio. The order was given to abandon Ed Sullivan. An announcer cleared his throat.

"Because of operating difficulties the Ed Sullivan Show has been interrupted. Until this is cleared up we will entertain you with recorded music."

"Electricity can be quite lingering," Mr. Masters said firmly, refusing to be shunted aside by CBS.

"And so can you," muttered the chief engineer on duty, as he composed his resignation.

"Robert," Jane said softly. "You are an expert with money. As far as investments are concerned your knowledge and acumen are without equal. Why must you stoop to playing with appliances?"

"Do you really feel that way?" Robert asked, pleased. His anger began to diminish and, as it did, his image faded on television screens. Mrs. Masters gathered her husband into her arms.

"I've never joked about your work, Robert," she said. "You're the best investment councilor in New York."

Robert Masters smiled and deserted television as applause rang through homes across the nation.

"You're right about one thing, Jane," he said ruefully. "I really loused up the television. I wonder what Ed Sullivan had on for tonight?"

Two hours later they found out. Marie Masters drove home from her grandmother's house and flew into the living room.

"Why didn't you tell me?" she demanded. "We might have missed it."

"Missed what?" Jane asked. "And what are you doing home? I thought you were staying with mother until tomorrow."

"How can you take it so calmly?" Marie exulted. "I thought you were wonderful. Gram thought Dad was overacting but I didn't agree with her. And why didn't you tell me?"

Robert Masters took his daughter's hand and led her to the sofa.

"Sit down," he said firmly. He waited while she sat. "Now please explain yourself coherently and without your usual modern day expressions."

"Father," Marie smiled. "Stop being obtuse. Gram and I watched Ed Sullivan."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jane and Robert looked at each other.

"That's nice," Jane said, hopefully.

"You should have told us you were going to be on," Marie insisted. "And your material could have been a little better."

"Material?" Robert asked. "Is this more of your school talk?"

"But the ending was wonderful," Marie said. "I almost cried when Mother said you were the most."

"I said what?" Jane asked, wonderingly.

"Sorry," Marie said. "When you said Dad was the best investment man in the business."

There were a few moments of silence and then Robert leaned forward.

"Are you trying to say that you thought you saw your mother and me on television?" he asked softly.

"I didn't think," Marie laughed. "I saw."

"Marie," Jane Masters said, patting her daughter's hand. "It must have been someone else. Your father and I have been home all evening."

"I told Gram it wasn't a set," Marie said. "I knew the room was real. They had the camera right here, didn't they?"

"It wasn't us," her father stated.

"Who else says 'Damn it to hell' like you, Father?"

"Marie!" Jane gasped.

"On television?" Robert demanded.

"And then you hopped around the room swearing," Marie said. Robert and Jane sank back in their chairs.

"Did I want your mother to call a doctor?" Robert asked faintly.

"Certainly," Marie said. "I laughed."

"Good Lord!" Robert cried. Jane slowly covered her mouth.

"You shouldn't have laughed," she said reprovingly to her daughter.

"That's not the point, my dear," Robert sighed. "Apparently I did something with that screw driver and we were on television."

Marie stared at her parents.

"You're not joking? You didn't know?"

"Your father tried to fix the television set," Jane explained.

"Oh."

Robert studied the two women in his life.

"It's that simple, is it?" he said sadly.

"Oh, Daddy," Marie said unhappily. "I didn't mean that. You were really very good."

Robert groaned.

"I imagine I was. Was it a clear picture?"

"I knew you almost immediately. But Gram kept fussing with the controls."

"Isn't that annoying?" Jane mused. "She always does that. — Oh my heavens!"

"What's the matter?" Robert asked quickly.

"This dress," Jane fretted. "I should have worn the taffeta. I look

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

positively huge in this. I hope Mrs. Pembrooke wasn't watching."

"I've been thinking," Marie said. "Perhaps no one else recognized either of you. There were no credit lines and no announcements. If anyone asks, just deny everything."

A smile slowly formed on Robert Masters' face.

"There are times when I regret having sent you to Radcliffe, but this is not one of them," he beamed. "A man is fortunate to have a daughter with a good mind. And you did well by speeding home to warn us about all this."

"Could we discuss allowance?" Marie asked. Mr. Masters stretched and yawned.

"Now I think I'll go up to bed," he announced. He kissed his wife and daughter. "Goodnight all."

They watched him leave; then Jane turned to her daughter.

"Answer me truthfully. Did I look positively huge?"

There were a few remarks passed at the office Monday morning about the mix-up on the Ed Sullivan show. One partner mentioned that an actor looked startlingly like Robert but the programming was so poor you couldn't make sense out of the act. Beyond that nothing was said and the day passed easily. On Thursday evening the Masters visited Jane's mother and swore her to silence. All went well until the next Saturday evening. The Masters were having company and Robert was playing solitaire while waiting for the guests to arrive. A vital queen seemed to be missing. Robert lifted the edge of a card slowly.

"That's cheating," Jane called from the hall.

"I'm not playing against anyone," Robert muttered.

"Your honor is at stake," Jane said.

"Honor my foot," Robert snapped. "One queen and I'm certain this will come out."

The Masters' television set was off or they might have noticed a faint image beginning to form alongside Bud Collyer.

"Cheating at solitaire is a sign of no personal integrity," Jane insisted. Robert hurried through the pack again.

"I need that queen!" he said hotly. Bud Collyer leaned forward and studied the monitor. Then he looked around and examined the stage. He smiled and turned back to the contestants.

"Now for the hundred dollar clock —" he began.

"Who's that?" the husband contestant asked, pointing at Robert Masters on the monitor.

"I haven't the faintest idea," Bud admitted. "And I suggest we just disregard him."

"It's not just to make us nervous?" the husband asked.

"You'd be surprised whom it's making nervous," Bud Collyer said. "For the hundred dollar clock —"

Jane walked into the living room.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You can't have the queen," she said. "It's covered."

Beat the Clock watchers were treated to the sight of a good forthright bit of cheating. Mr. Masters glared at his wife, seized the red queen, and slapped it face up.

"There!" he said.

"I think that stinks," Jane told him. Bud Collyer winced and inadvertently knocked over four paper cups just as the two contestants arrived with spoons held in each hand and a potato on each spoon. The husband looked down at the cups and then at Bud.

"Why did you do that?" he asked.

"Well —" Bud began.

"Ain't no way we can get the potatoes in them when you knocked 'em over," the husband complained.

"Well —" Bud tried again. The buzzer sounded.

"See? Now we didn't beat the clock," the husband pointed out. The wife began to cry.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," Bud said. "I was clumsy. We'll put you past the hundred dollar clock and the two hundred dollar clock. Right up to the Jackpot Clock. Okay?"

The man frowned.

"I suppose you'll be knocking the words off the board."

Bud wiped some perspiration away.

"We'll give you the television set," he said. The man and woman smiled.

"That sounds fair," the husband said. "We'll take it."

Robert went through the pack and slammed the cards to the table.

"What's wrong now?" Jane asked.

"I also need a jack."

"Cheating shows," Jane said airily. Robert stood up.

"That is an asinine statement," he shouted.

Bud Collyer swallowed.

"I think someone in Control should do something," he said hopefully. A door opened.

"What in hell do you think we're trying to do?" a frenzied voice boomed. The door slammed.

"Next contestants," Bud whispered.

Early Monday morning CBS Vice-President Maystrik's phone rang. He lifted it gingerly and found the Federal Communications Commission on the other end.

"Castleman speaking," the phone boomed.

"Hello, Neil," Maystrik said warily.

"You can't get away with this, you know," Neil Castleman told him. "Don't know why you even tried."

"Away with what?" Earle Maystrik asked.

"Come now, boy," Castleman laughed. "Superimposing on the *Beat the Time* program."

"*Beat the Clock!*" Vice-President Maystrik said clearly. "And we didn't superimpose. We didn't plan it. We don't know who the bird is."

"We do," Castleman said. "Rob-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ert Masters. Investment firm. How in the world did you talk him into it?"

"Neil," Maystrik said quietly. "Listen to me and believe what you hear. We had nothing to do with man appearing during our program. We don't know how it happened or even if it's going to happen again."

The FCC pondered a moment and made its decision.

"I'm sending Dave Whitman up there to handle this matter," Castleman said crisply. "It's not going to happen again."

But it did happen again and the FCC had no one but itself to blame. Dave Whitman and Earle Maystrik called on Robert Masters at his office.

"Yes," Robert confessed. "It's happened twice and I'm at a loss to explain it."

Dave nodded politely.

"Naturally we can't permit it to continue," he smiled. Robert frowned.

"Then I suggest you tell CBS to stop it," he said warmly. Mr. Maystrik joined the conversation.

"And I suggest you stay the hell off our programs," he snapped. "Our viewers don't tune in to see you."

Arthur Godfrey leaned forward, examined the monitor, and grinned. He motioned for silence.

"I been hoping for this," he drawled. "If you people out there think I act up once in awhile wait until you get a load of this fellow. All children under sixteen should be sent outdoors."

He leaned back and Mr. Masters obliged by leaping into furious focus.

"You can take your viewers and —" Robert Masters snarled. Dave interrupted him.

"Apparently the viewers do want to see him," he said. "NBC is quite concerned. In fact they tried to dummy up the same situation. Threw an image of a pretty girl in a bathing suit onto a few of their own programs."

"I certainly hope you took appropriate action," Maystrik said indignantly.

"We did," Dave Whitman said quietly. "And they insist we do the same with you."

"I'd like to see you try," Robert Masters sneered. His secretary entered.

"Excuse me," she announced, "but the receptionist called. She says you're on the television set out there. She says Arthur Godfrey is convulsed."

Earle Maystrik covered his face.

"What will the sponsors say?" he groaned.

"Arthur is not bothering with commercials while you people are on," the secretary informed them. They ran to the reception room and stared at themselves on the big screen. As embarrassment overcame anger the picture of Robert Masters faded and with him went Maystrik of CBS and Whitman of the FCC.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED.

Dave watched with interest and turned to Masters.

"You're no longer angry?" he asked.

"Why, no," Robert said. "But I can be very quickly."

"Let's see."

Robert grimaced and frowned. Nothing happened.

"Can't seem to make it," he smiled.

"You're a cheap fourflusher," Dave said.

"Here he comes again!" Godfrey shouted.

"Aha!" Dave gloated. He stood there smiling.

"Well?" Robert demanded.

"You told us that this began when you tried to fix your set," Dave said. Robert nodded and left Godfrey.

"You were tuned to CBS," Dave continued. "When you hit the current it looks like you charged yourself and now you're a sending station exactly like CBS. When you're angry you generate enough power to televise."

"So now I'm no cheap fourflusher," Robert said ruefully. "I'm a television station."

"I think we're going to sue," Mr. Maystrik announced.

"Easy. Easy," Dave cautioned. "We'll be back with Arthur."

"I beg your pardon," Maystrik said quickly. Robert pointed at him.

"I don't like you," he said, and then turned to Dave. "And I don't think I care for you either. I suppose you're good at fixing electric clocks."

"Well — I can do it, if necessary," Dave admitted.

"I knew it," Robert said disdainfully. "Now, gentlemen, we have used enough of the firm's time. If you have anything further to discuss, and I imagine you have, I suggest we meet at my home this evening. I do not enjoy the prospect but I wish to get this matter cleared up."

"We have all big shows tonight," Maystrik cried. Masters smiled.

"Just avoid making me angry."

Marie Masters found Dave Whitman charming.

"I'm very glad they sent you," she told him. "Up at Radcliffe we're one hundred per cent in favor of the FCC."

"You don't say," Dave grinned. "That's wonderful. I'd like to tell you all about how we operate."

"Fast, I believe, would cover it," Robert said drily.

"Robert!" Jane called. "That's not polite."

"Watch your ear lobes," Robert muttered, walking across the room.

"Why did he say that?" Dave asked.

"I have no idea," Marie said as she smiled disarmingly. Maystrik motioned and Dave joined the CBS vice-president and Mr. Masters.

"Well?" Maystrik asked. "What are we going to do?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Capitalize on it," Dave said crisply.

"Capitalize on what?" Robert asked.

"On your ability," Dave explained. "I talked with Washington most of the afternoon and, while they're not too enthusiastic, they're willing to go along with a test."

"I refuse," Robert said.

"You don't even know what you're refusing," Dave said.

"Are you trying to irritate me?" Robert asked.

"Mr. Masters, you are in a position to help the government," Dave said.

"Republicans or Democrats?" Robert asked quickly.

"Both."

"I refuse."

"Mr. Masters, by both I mean everyone. If an attack knocks out our communications we cannot communicate with the public."

Robert Masters stared at the FCC man.

"What are you talking about?" he asked.

"I'm talking about using your ability in the event of war," Dave said firmly. "In the event of attack the public must be kept informed. Our plans are all set up to do this. But if the communications centers are disabled we're sunk. You will be our emergency station."

"I think that's wonderful," Marie said. "Father will make a terrific station."

"If you please, Marie," Robert said. "I would like to hear more about this ridiculous plan."

"Anyone tuned to CBS can receive you," Dave went on. "You televise yourself and those near you and the view is always on your face. Either you or someone next to you can read the instructions to the public. That's all there is. We'll run a test tomorrow from your office."

"Have you spoken to — ?"

"The other partners of Mertons, Stoehr, Masters and Kohn were delighted with the idea," Dave said. Robert walked about the room slowly. Every so often he looked at Dave Whitman. Once he stopped in front of Dave.

"I'd much prefer broadcasting just to the Republicans," he said hopefully.

"Mr. Masters, how can the Democrats be restrained from watching?" Dave sighed.

"You're the FCC," Robert snapped. "You figure a way."

"It can't be done," Dave said flatly. Robert walked again.

"What are you so quiet about?" he asked Maystrik. Maystrik shrugged.

"I don't know. CBS doesn't seem to have much to say about all this. I wonder if I should call Ed Murrow?"

Robert froze and his wife and daughter immediately leaped up. While Jane soothed him and led his thinking back to the test of the next morning, Marie explained to Maystrik and Dave.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We are very fond of Mr. Murrow but a few weeks ago he said some things about taxes. Father has banned him for a month."

"Oh?"

"But if you tell him, please explain that Father has at one time or another, banned John Daly and Mr. Swayze for lesser offenses."

Mr. Masters rejoined the conversation.

"I am agreed," he said. "Tomorrow morning. And now I'm sure you gentlemen will excuse us."

Mr. Maystrik quickly took the hint and Mr. Whitman followed him to the door.

"Good evening," Robert said, shaking their hands and ushering them into the night.

"Good evening, Father," Marie said, squeezing through the door after them.

"Where are you going?" he asked. Marie motioned for Dave to wait at the car.

"Dave is going to take me for a beer," she smiled, "and it sounds antiseptic but I may end up being kissed by the FCC. 'Night."

She hurried down the walk. Robert stalked back to the living room and confronted his wife.

"Why, in heaven's name, didn't we send her to NYU?" he demanded.

The group in Mr. Mertons' office was held to a minimum. Along with the four partners were Mr. Maystrik, two other CBS officials, Mr. Whitman, and a technician to handle the huge television set which had been installed.

"We go on at eleven thirty," Dave said. "CBS will go off the air. You'll be on your own."

"I'm getting nervous."

"Buck up, man," Mr. Stoehr said stoutly. "Imagine you're investing someone else's money."

"You'd better be as good as *Strike It Rich*," Mr. Maystrik warned. "This is their time."

"Oh, shut up," Mr. Mertons said. "This is patriotic."

"Get ready," Dave said.

"Where will I stand?" Robert asked.

"It doesn't make much difference," Dave smiled. "I'm reading the announcement so I'll stand next to you."

Mr. Masters stepped to the center of the office.

"How about here?"

"Fine," Dave agreed. He stepped to Mr. Masters' side. "Just a few seconds to go. — Get ready. — We're on!"

The screen of the big set faded and went blank. Everyone waited. Dave nudged Robert.

"I'm sweating," Robert whispered.

"Get angry," Dave said.

"I don't feel angry."

"Think of the Democrats," Mertons encouraged. Mr. Masters concentrated and then grinned sickly.

"I don't think I know any," he said. Dave nodded.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I was afraid you'd make an ass of yourself," he said clearly.

"A what?" Robert asked.

"You heard me," Dave retorted. "If you had a little common courtesy and listened when someone spoke perhaps —"

"An ass of myself!" Masters shouted.

"You're on," the technician announced. Everyone looked at the screen except Mr. Masters who continued to glare at Dave.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Dave began. "You are now watching a test which is of grave importance to each of you. It is being sponsored by the United States government in association with the Columbia Broadcasting System."

"You're fading," the technician called. Dave brought his heel down on Robert's toes.

"That's better," the man called. Robert turned his head to glare at the technician and Dave found himself speaking with his back to the television audience. He pulled Mr. Masters roughly back in place.

"A full explanation of the irregularities and any unusual language —"

"He means me," Mr. Masters said nastily.

"— will be in tomorrow's newspapers," Dave continued. "This represents independently powered television which will bring you instructions in the event of enemy attack."

"And you all had better damn well listen," Mr. Masters stated, "because I can stand only so much of this boy."

"Should the occasion ever arise for use of this facility, please leave your sets tuned to CBS even if they seem to be blank," Dave continued. "Mr. Robert Masters and a qualified announcer will bring the necessary message to you."

"Fading," the technician called. Dave's elbow found Robert's stomach.

"Ugh!" Robert gasped. "Do that once more and you won't be around for any enemy attack."

"This test originated in the offices of Mertons, Stoehr, Masters and Kohn," Dave concluded. He stepped aside and Mr. Masters' partners crowded around him. In unison they sang.

"*Your investment will be safe*
Stocks, or bonds, or loan.
Hurry down and ask to see
Mertons, Stoehr, Masters or Kohn."

Robert Masters swallowed.

"Who in blazes thought of that?" he asked.

"Hello, Jimmy," Stoehr called out, waving. "Eat your lunch for mommy."

Robert looked around in alarm. The partners turned hurriedly to remain facing the unseen camera.

"I'm bringing Sam home for dinner, honey," Mertons announced for his wife's benefit.

"Gentlemen!" Dave called. "Per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sonal messages are not permitted."

"I'm getting weary of this rubbish," Robert announced tiredly "Are we off?"

"You're off," the man at the set said.

"Well done," Dave smiled. "I had to let your associates get in a plug. It won't happen again."

"I hope it never needs to happen again," Robert said. "The impact — the full meaning — just now struck home. I think it was that ridiculous commercial that did it."

"You did a good job," Dave said warmly. "I'm getting along now; but I'll see you tonight."

"Why?"

"Marie invited me for dinner," Dave smiled. "She's some girl." He waved and left.

"Antiseptic, my foot," Robert sneered. He turned to Maystrik. "Did you notice a band-aid on Whitman's ear?"

Dinner went far more smoothly than expected and Marie explained it to Dave in whispers.

"The experience sobered father quite a bit. He realizes there are emotions much more important that anger."

"Like love?" Dave asked.

"No," Marie said. "Like fishing. Father considers that an emotion. He has decided to relax, enjoy himself more, and conserve his power for the war effort."

"That's very admirable," Dave agreed.

The remainder of the evening was pure light and laughter. Mr. Masters even confided his plan for an immediate vacation.

"— and we'll spend a number of weeks along the Mediterranean coast," he concluded. "Just the three of us."

"Oh, Father," Marie said sorrowfully. "I can't go."

"Why not? Radcliffe has released you."

"It's not that," Marie said. "It's Dave. We're in love. We're going to be married."

Robert Masters stood up slowly.

"You're in what?"

"Love," Marie said.

"With that?" Mr. Masters pointed a quivering finger at Dave. "Are you asking me to be father-in-law to the rudest, most self-centered creature I've ever met?"

His voice rose and Dave ran to the television set, snapped it on, and turned to CBS. Mr. Masters filled the screen. Dave turned quickly.

"Now, Dad —" he began.

"*Dad!*"

A few of the cheaper sets in the immediate neighborhood blew their picture tubes and minor tubes gave out all over the city.

"This little nincompoop has called me dirty names," Robert shouted.

"Conserve your energy," Dave pleaded.

"Stamped on my foot and hit me in the stomach," Robert ranted. Dave ran to stand beside him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Ladies and gentlemen," Dave pleaded. "What you are now watching is strictly a personal matter. I feel certain you will understand, and I ask that you switch immediately to NBC."

He turned back to Mr. Masters.

"Dad," he urged. "Let's talk this out in a democratic way."

Robert crouched ominously and pointed at Dave.

"He called me that again!" he shouted. "And he used that dirty word too!"

"Robert," Mrs. Masters observed with interest. "Look. You're coming over in color now. I didn't know we had a color set."

They stared at the picture tube where Robert Masters glowed in brilliant shades of red. Portions of the coaxial cable melted away in the Middle West. Robert placed his hand on his forehead and quickly pulled it away.

"I'm burning up," he gasped, falling back into a chair. "Get a thermometer." Jane hurried to do his bidding. Robert glared at the instrument and thrust it beneath his tongue.

Millions of viewers waited in silence for the required two minutes.

Dave Whitman studied the television set.

"I believe you're fading slightly, sir," he announced carefully. Robert removed the thermometer and squinted toward the normal mark. Slowly, with horror, his eye travelled up the tube; then he sank back and tossed it over his shoulder.

"You're gone," Dave said.

"I know," Robert sighed. "In the prime of life."

"I mean from television. You're off."

Robert shrugged and smiled a very small smile.

"What difference does it make, son?" he asked quietly. Marie gasped.

"Oh he's sick," she whispered.

"What about the defense plan, Mr. Masters?" Dave asked. Robert closed his eyes.

"I don't think I can get angry at anything."

"Edward R. Murrow," Dave said.

"A fine chap," Robert mused. "Smokes too much."

"Mother threw away your trout rod," Marie lied, watching her father carefully. He merely held out his hand and clasped his wife's.

"It was rather worn and I guess Jane really knows best," he sighed.

"He has blown his stack," Marie whispered to Dave. "Short-circuited himself clean out."

Dave whispered in Marie's ear. She nodded and leaned toward her father.

"I'm voting Democrat next November," she said clearly. Mr. Master's eyebrows raised and one hand grasped the chair arm. Marie and Dave watched nervously. Robert relaxed again.

"You must make your own decisions, Marie," he said in a fatherly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tone. Marie regarded him suspiciously and pulled Dave across the room.

"He's not finished yet," she said. "I'll bet he just used up all his anger. I'd say we have maybe three months."

"Time enough for a honeymoon," Dave smiled. "Then back to work. Perhaps this will tone him down and he'll conserve himself for emergencies."

"I wonder if I should ask for a raise in allowance," Marie mused. Dave frowned.

"Let's not chance that," he decided. "Besides we'll be married soon."

Mr. Masters watched as they kissed. He smiled approvingly.

"Lovely young couple," he murmured to his wife. Jane shook out the aspirins, arranged the ice pack neatly atop his head, and shook down the discarded thermometer.

"Open up," she ordered.

Coming Next Month

There are good things coming up next month: the May F&SF, on the stands around April 1, will feature two novelets — *Rite of Passage*, by Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore, which, in the inimitable Kuttner-Moore style, applies rigorous science-fictional thinking to a future ruled by magic, and Daniel F. Galouye's *The Pliable*, a strict detective story of interstellar murder with an unheardof weapon and a startling solution. R. L. Richardson's recent speculations concerning sexual activity on Mars will be answered in two cogent brief articles by Poul Anderson and Miriam Allen deFord; and the list of short stories, including entries by Richard Matheson, Willard Marsh and others, will be headed by *Icarus Montgolfier Wright*, the newest and one of the most moving of Ray Bradbury's poetic glimpses of our future. This will be an "all new" issue — no reprints. Watch for it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

J. Francis McComas has one abiding preoccupation, more important to him than science fiction or football or even the Plains Indians; and that dominant interest is penology. Surely no other topic is at once so vitally significant to society . . . and so casually ignored by the individual member of society; and it's McComas' hope, in time, to build up a corpus of stories of future penology which may illuminate some of our own contemporary problems — or at least wake us up to their existence. Shock Treatment, *the first of these stories, has appeared only in a small edition of a hardcover collection; its theme (the pros and cons of the death penalty) is so urgent and its treatment in interstellar terms so stimulating that it demands this presentation to the larger newsstand audience.*

Shock Treatment

by J. FRANCIS McCOMAS

THE LAST WITNESS FOR THE PROSEcution finished his statement, rose from the witness chair, and walked back to the first row of the spectator section. His footsteps on the rough floor boards were loud in the quiet room. Hugo Blair, Citizens' Counsel, glanced down at his papers, looked briefly at the defense table, then turned to the bench.

"That closes the Citizens' case," he rasped. "I think we have proven beyond any doubt that the defendant, David Tasker, entered the combination store and living quarters of our pharmacist, Leon Jacoby, with intent to steal Jacoby's stock of the drug, dakarine. Jacoby discovered him, tried to reason with the thief, but Tasker stabbed Jacoby several times with a knife. Jacoby was killed instantly. Tasker then broke open a jar of dakarine, took most of the jar's contents, and, we presume, returned to his quarters. He was found there the following morning, wallowing in a dakarine-induced stupor, the blood-stained knife on his person. This horrible crime has removed from the community its only qualified pharmacist. It has —"

"Have you any more witnesses, Counselor?" Judge Anthony Hrdlicka asked sharply.

"No, sir, I have not —"

"You will stand down then, Counselor. I must remind you that

© 1954 by Henry Holt & Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the law says Counsel is instructed to present evidence, not comment on it." There was a brief pause, then Blair nodded jerkily and sat down at his table. "You've done very well in our first case, Mr. Blair," Hrdlicka continued easily. "Very well, indeed. Um. I hope your conduct will serve as a model for all future Citizens' Counsels."

Blair's narrow shoulders were hunched and he stared down at his table, unmindful of the jury's vigorous nods of approval.

"Now," said Hrdlicka, "we'll hear from the defense. Counselor Giovannetti?"

Lisa Giovannetti arose. She still wore the skirt of her flight lieutenant's uniform but her primly cut blouse was made of recently milled new-world cloth, that dull produce of the plant popularly called the "cotton weed."

"I am faced with a severe problem . . ."

Her voice was almost inaudible.

"You'll have to speak louder, my dear," Hrdlicka said. "Remember, we're all new to this, so there's nothing for you to be embarrassed about."

"I'm sorry . . . I was saying that I have a problem. My — ah — my client has refused to give me any cooperation whatsoever. He just won't talk to me. And I have no witnesses, of course. Frankly, since the defendant won't take the stand — you know he has refused to plead one way or the other . . ." She paused, looked helplessly at the judge, then at Blair.

Dr. Pierre Malory leaned closer to Brandt Cardozo and said softly, "That's the drug, you know." Cardozo nodded, frowning. "Shouldn't really be on trial yet," he muttered.

"Um." Hrdlicka scowled at the defendant. "Refuses to say anything, eh? That does put you in a spot, Miss Giovannetti. Any ideas on the problem?"

"I — under other conditions — back home, that is . . . I suppose I would just throw my client on the mercy of the court. That's the correct phrase? But here — well, we have decided to do things differently. I'm glad . . . I think I will be right to leave everything up to the court — the way the court will operate according to our new penal code. . . ."

"Uh. You're just a little confused, Counselor, but I think I get your meaning. Yes . . ."

"I'm afraid I'm not a very eloquent counsel, Your Honor."

"But a wise one, my dear. Ahem!" Hrdlicka glared at the spectators. "I would remind all present that we are engaged in a very serious business! Um. Since our code makes provision for just such cases, we will accept the fact that Counselor Giovannetti offers no formal defense. Well." The old man leaned back in his chair and pushed his glasses up on his bald forehead. "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, respected counsel, our penal code has left certain matters

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to our own discretion. After all, a committee of seven laymen — one steward and six passengers of a space liner — none of them skilled in legal problems, could hardly be expected to foresee every contingency. So it's up to us to establish precedent. Um. Now, our law says every criminal trial must be guided — and in a large sense, *resolved* — by the analyses of the accused by two officials of the court: the court psychiatrist and the state penologist."

He gestured at Brandt Cardozo and Dr. Malory.

"Both of these officials are present, of course. And this court is bound by their recommendations. But it isn't clear just *when* they should offer such recommendations. Now, it seems logical to me that any such, ah, intimate discussions are not in order if an accused person is judged not guilty. Um. That's the way I see it. How about you, Mr. Blair?"

"I certainly do not believe theoretical evidence should be allowed to affect a verdict."

"Miss Giovannetti?"

"Isn't the psychiatric evidence intended to guide the *sentence*, Your Honor? Not the verdict?"

"Right. How about the experts themselves? What do you think, gentlemen?"

Cardozo and Malory glanced at each other and Malory nodded.

"I think Miss Giovannetti has exactly defined our position, sir," said Cardozo. "So we think the order you suggest is the proper one."

"Good." Hrdlicka scratched his nose. Brandt Cardozo was sure the old boy wanted a cigar very badly. "Well. According to USN law, this would be the time for the judge to charge the jury. But this community, marooned on an unknown planet as we are, cannot consider itself one of the United Solar Nations. We have cut out the closing speeches by prosecution and defense attorneys so our judicial procedures won't be cluttered up with tear-jerking rantings about the grand old Solarian flag or the prisoner's dear old mother." The jury chuckled at this. "Further, we have expressly limited the scope of the judge's charge, so no jury will ever be improperly influenced by one man's opinions or — what's more likely — the state of one man's ulcers on one particular day." This time the jury laughed openly. "Or even by one man's attempts at humor," Hrdlicka blandly went on. "Now, much as I'd like to, I can't set any precedent on these lines, for the evidence presents no problems whatsoever. You've heard the testimony of your friends and neighbors, you've listened to the men you yourselves have made your protectors, your police. You've heard the Citizens' Defender say her client has refused to help her set up any kind of defense. Um. So, you'll leave the courtroom now and go and think about all that and reach your verdict. I know you'll do your duty. That's all I have to say."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The jury filed out the small side door, stood around in the afternoon sunshine and had a collective cigarette, filed in, and their foreman solemnly announced that they unanimously found David Tasker guilty of the robbery and murder of Leon Jacoby.

Brandt Cardozo had heard many juries deliver that awful verdict in the courtrooms of several planets. He had never seen anything like this. Now, in this bare room of raw boards that was designed as a Council Hall first and a courtroom second, there wasn't that long sigh shuddering over the audience as all concerned suddenly knew the tension was eased at last and the struggle for a man's life had ended in defeat.

There had been no tension. Eager curiosity, of course, for the spectators felt it was just as much their concern as the judge's, say, to discover how their brand-new laws would work. But there had been nothing to assail their nerves and their emotions, because nothing so tangible as death had been in the offing. Tasker's life or death had never been debated.

Brandt Cardozo glanced over at Tasker. The defendant leered at the jury. Open resentment of his contempt showed on the faces of some.

Hrdlicka muttered a "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen," rustled some papers, cleared his throat, and said, "Um. Well, we're on our own now. Lot of us had some experience with law — know I have with one kind of corporation code or another — so, up to now, we've known what to expect. But now . . . well, when we finally decided we were stuck on this world and had to make our own way, we decided we'd try some new ways of doing things. We're actually going to use one of those new methods right now. And while I'm not a particularly religious man, I say, 'God be with us.'" He looked musingly down at Tasker. The prisoner twiddled his thumbs. "The jury's decided the prisoner's guilty of murder. Only possible verdict, of course. Now, we're going to use our best brains to decide what to do with him . . . all right, I call on Dr. Pierre Malory."

"Well," breathed Malory, "here we go."

He walked over quickly and seated himself in the witness chair.

"Now, Doctor," Hrdlicka said, "I feel you should give your material as testimony. That is, subject to question from bench, counsel, or jury. I said, subject to *question*. Not challenge. Not debate." He flicked a sidelong glance at Hugo Blair. "No cross-examination. Only time we'll bother you is when you're usin' technical terms the rest of us don't follow. Now. Let's have your background. For the record."

"Yes, sir," Malory's voice was quietly purposeful. "I am Pierre Malory, Doctor of Medicine. I was a passenger on the S. & G. liner, the *Tonia*, when it crashed on this planet. Since I was the only medical

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man among the survivors, I have served as the community's physician. Six months ago, we adopted a penal code to take care of problems of law and order. That code called for the services of a psychiatrist and, since we had no better trained man, I was elected to the job."

"We've been lucky to have you, Doctor. Now, you have examined the prisoner, David Tasker?"

"I have."

"For how long?"

"Since the day of his arrest, six days ago."

"Know anything about him before that?"

"Not on the ship. He was, I believe, a member of the engine maintenance crew and I, as a passenger, would not come in contact with him. In the year we have been here in the New World, I have had little time to take any note of him. I did treat him once."

"What for, Doctor?"

"Facial contusions. I believe he had been in a fight."

"I see. Well, now, suppose you give us the result of your official observations."

Pierre Malory stretched out his long legs, crossed them, moved his body sideways in his chair.

"It's going to be a difficult job, sir. For three reasons."

"Go ahead. Let's have them."

"First. I am definitely not what I hope my successors will be: a fully qualified specialist in mental disease. You all know I'm just a general practitioner. Second. I haven't had the time or the equipment to make any sort of analysis of the emotions, personality, attitudes of David Tasker. Lord! even if I had all the instruments I could possibly want, plus a complete staff of trained personnel, I couldn't begin an analysis in six days! And thirdly, the prisoner is obviously under the influence of the drug, dakarine."

"Well, Doctor, as to your first two reasons," said Hrdlicka, "we all know how little equipment was salvaged. And we all know how many lives you've saved with it in the past year. We're not worried about your qualifications; this court will take what you say as gospel. There'll be no argument, believe me. But maybe you'd better tell us about this dakarine."

"Dakarine is, briefly, an alkaloid derived from the dakar plant which was discovered on Centauri III. That plant is now grown under government supervision on all Earth-type planets. When used in minute quantities, dakarine has produced marvelous results in the treatment of all types of psychic shock. That is, if it is administered to a patient suffering anything from excessive grief to extreme catatonia, the patient's interest in the world about him is almost immediately restored to normal.

"However, the drug — like so many — has its dangers. It is habit-forming. It produces in its addicts a cheerful conviction that everything

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the addict wants to do is quite all right. Nothing the addict attempts will ever go wrong — *is* wrong." Malory straightened in his chair, leaned forward. "The prisoner Tasker is obviously still under the influence of the drug. His lack of interest in his predicament is full proof of that. And I don't know how long the effects of the dose he took will last, for the effect of a given quantity of the drug varies with the individual. And I don't know how much dakarine Tasker took or what his personal reaction to it is. I do know that Tasker, being full of dakarine, is a man incapable of any sort of cooperation with a psychiatrist."

Tasker sat impassive under the concerted gaze of the entire room.

"Just how do you mean?" asked Hrdlicka.

"To appraise the mind, we first evaluate the body. Tasker's in wretched physical condition. But his symptoms can be nothing more than those of prolonged use of dakarine. They probably are.

"Now, as to his mind. Naturally, he refused to give me any response to tests. I think I've managed to make a pretty fair guess at his IQ — it's average. About eighty-one Andrews, I should say. Perhaps point eleven Herwig-Dollheim, but that's just a guess. Right now, his personality is, must be, wholly false. He's absolutely optimistic, crudely merry — to him everything's a joke, an obscene joke; he's completely self-righteous. He has no approach to problems because for David Tasker *there are no problems.*"

"It seems to me," Blair said coldly, "you don't give us much to go on."

"That is correct, Counselor. I haven't much to go on myself."

The jury glanced uneasily at each other. Hugo Blair tapped his table with a pen.

"Well, Doctor," Hrdlicka said, "what shall we do about it?"

"I don't think we can do anything until Tasker is completely free from the influence of the drug."

Blair jumped to his feet.

"I fail to see your reasoning," he snapped.

Malory was puzzled.

"I don't follow you," he said.

"I submit that, since Tasker was *not* under the influence of any drug when he committed the crime of murder, we have no right to take this business of drug addiction into our present consideration!"

Hrdlicka rapped his desk with his gavel.

"That's ridiculous, Counselor! The law calls for a thorough analysis of the accused; and even a layman like me can see that no analysis is possible if the accused is under the influence of any drug that affects his faculties. And I would like to point out to the entire court that the problem of murder has been settled. We're not concerned with that now, we're concerned with the problem of Tasker. Um. Dr. Malory, I'll take your suggestion for delay under ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

visement, unless you want me to act on it now?"

Malory hesitated, glanced quickly at Brandt Cardozo. Cardozo looked at Blair, still on his feet, and his mind raced. After a moment he made his decision. Settle it now, he said to himself, and shook his head very slightly.

"I rather think, Your Honor," Malory then said, "that you might hear Mr. Cardozo and then make your decision."

"Very well. Mr. Blair, I see you are still on your feet. Do you wish to address the court?"

"I wish to state that I, both as a citizen of this community and as an officer of this court, consider Dr. Malory's attempts at diagnosis wholly inadequate for the purposes of this trial!"

Hrdlicka opened his mouth, but Malory raised a hand.

"They are inadequate, sir," he said to Blair. His tone was gentle. "Perhaps I should give you my own feeling toward this man. My feeling — the feeling of a man who has practiced medicine for over twenty years — is that David Tasker is essentially a very unhappy person. He's inferior; all drug addicts feel inferior. He's frightened; all belligerent persons are frightened. I hope someday to learn why he's unhappy . . . frightened . . . belligerent. I hope to learn that for my good, for your good, as well as for Tasker's good."

"I think we understand that," grunted Hrdlicka. "Anything further, Doctor?"

"I believe not."

"We'll call Mr. Cardozo . . . if Mr. Blair will yield the floor."

Scowling, Blair sat down.

"Nice going," Cardozo whispered as he passed Malory on the way to the witness stand.

"Now, Mr. Cardozo," said Hrdlicka, "our penologist. Or warden. We don't have much of a prison for you now, eh? But, as we redevelop the complexities of civilization, I suppose we'll have plenty such. Um. Now, suppose you tell us just how you follow up Dr. Malory's work."

"Essentially, I investigate any accused as a social, rather than a psychiatric, case. And I try to combine Dr. Malory's findings with the limitations of the situation and set up means for rehabilitation."

"I see. You've an eye to the defendant's future, rather than to his past?"

"That's very well put, Your Honor."

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, for once we have a real expert to help us. Mr. Cardozo was a penologist by profession, associate warden at the maximum-security institution on Pluto. So, while we've been going by-guess-and-by-God so far, now we've got a gentleman who knows what he's talking about."

"Your Honor!" It was Blair again.

"Now what is it, Mr. Blair?"

"I'd like to ask the penologist one question."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Is it relevant, Mr. Blair?"

"I think it is."

"All right, all right." The old man looked very weary.

Blair bustled up to the stand. Even seated, Brandt Cardozo was a head taller than the little man. "You and I were conversing in the bachelor lounge of the *Tonia* when it crashed," Blair rapped out. "Did you or did you not say to me at that time that you did not believe in prisons?"

Hrdlicka leaned over his desk so suddenly his glasses slid down over his nose again.

"Counselor!" he roared. "A conversation out of the past has nothing to do with this trial! You know that! Now, sit down before I order you to leave the court!"

"Your honor," said Brandt Cardozo, "I've no objection to answering that question . . . if Mr. Blair will let me finish my sentence, this time." He gazed tranquilly at the flushed counsel. "When you interrupted me back on the *Tonia*, sir, I recollect that I was about to say this: I do not approve of prisons as institutions for punishment. I most firmly believe in them as a means toward rehabilitation — if they are so devised."

"That's enough," rumbled Hrdlicka. "Mr. Blair knows the thinking behind our law and what's more, he knows you're a leading exponent of that thinking."

"Yes," sneered Blair, "we all know how bitterly Mr. Cardozo was opposed to capital punishment."

There are your fangs, thought Cardozo, bared at last.

"Sit down, Mr. Blair." Hrdlicka's voice was suddenly quiet.

Blair sat down, a smirk on his gnome's face.

"Now," Hrdlicka was not his usual rumbling self, "what's your advice to this court, Mr. Cardozo?"

Brandt Cardozo sat relaxed in his chair, a rangy, big-shouldered man with a boyishly cheerful face.

"Sometime, sir," he said, "we'll have a large staff of penal experts. It will be a fairly simple job for the penologist to take the psychiatrist's findings, correlate them with those of his own staff, and be able to make a very accurate recommendation to the court. The penologist can set up a long-range program for the prisoner, defining exactly what is needed in the way of special training or treatment, medical care, minimum security confinement, maximum security . . ."

"Your Honor, I must ask your indulgence once more." Blair rushed on before Hrdlicka could stop him. "Mr. Cardozo, you used the expression 'maximum security.' Are we to presume you admit the need for such an institution?"

"Certainly. I'm afraid we'll need one for Tasker. For a while, at least. Any penologist, or criminologist if you prefer, will admit that we can't rehabilitate certain men and women. In other words, they're incurable. We get to them too late to help. To

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

protect ourselves we must keep those persons locked up. And watch them pretty closely. Of course, we must try to make their confinement useful — useful to them and to society."

"Thank you," said Blair.

"Go on, Mr. Cardozo," said Hrdlicka.

"Your Honor, I can't get any help from Tasker either. I have talked to survivors of the crew about him. Of course, I must regard much of their talk as gossip. They think Tasker's papers were forged; they say he was lazy, a careless worker, a trouble-maker. They think Tasker has a criminal record. I'd say he probably has. At any rate, I'm going to regard him as such until both Dr. Malory and I can accumulate more detailed and accurate information about the man."

"Um. So what do we do with him?"

Brandt Cardozo felt the uneasy gaze of the audience on his back. He looked at the jury. They were frowning, worried.

"Well, sir, here's where we, as a society, meet our first challenge. A well-liked and most useful member of our community has been killed by a man whose worth to us is pretty dubious." Brandt Cardozo straightened his big shoulders. "We have decided we won't take the easy answer to such a problem — we won't shrug off the burden by killing the killer. Let's meet the challenge, then. First of all, hospitalize Tasker, under guard, of course, until Dr. Malory is satisfied Tasker's free of all dakarine effects. Then, let Dr. Malory work on him; I'm confident the doctor can very soon — once the man is his normal self — decide how to order his confinement so Tasker will have every chance for readjustment. There was a method of sentencing the mentally irresponsible in the System; such persons were detained during the pleasure of the court.

"I think you can do the same. Simply order David Tasker to be detained during the pleasure of this court — in the custody of the proper authorities. I would further suggest that you provide for periodic examinations of the prisoner by yourself, assisted by such citizens as you deem necessary — Mr. Blair, Miss Giovannetti — to determine any future disposal of his case. Eventually we can decide whether we can hope for rehabilitation or settle for perpetual confinement."

"Well . . . that makes very good sense to me. You may step down, Mr. Cardozo, and thank you."

Hrdlicka propped his elbows on his desk and rested his chin in his cupped hands. He stared somberly at the crowded room.

"The court's going to follow Mr. Cardozo's program," he rumbled. "But before I make it official, I'd like to say one or two things to all of you, as people of this planet we call the New World. I was on the committee that drew up our civil and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

criminal codes. I agreed to all the ideas that people like Mr. Cardozo wanted to incorporate into the laws. Voted for them. But I wasn't sure they'd work. I'm an old man and I guess my years have made me cynical. I thought if the pressure was on us, if ever, we'd all take the easy way out. Well, we haven't. I'm glad. Speaks damn well for our future."

He raised his head and dropped his hands flat on the desk.

"If it's agreeable to all concerned, I'll sentence the convicted defendant. Any objections, Miss Giovannetti?"

"Your Honor — I — I'm awfully proud . . . I think this court has done a great thing today . . ."

"Think so, too. D'ye agree, Mr. Blair? Oh . . . I see you've got something to say. Well, go ahead."

Hugo Blair had darted to his feet and stepped a pace away from his chair, so the spectators' view of him would not be blocked by his table.

"Trouble, Brandt," whispered Malory.

"I don't think so. Hrdlicka will handle him."

"Your Honor," rasped Blair, "I am an officer of this court."

"So?"

"That means, sir, that I am obliged to speak out when this court fails to serve the interests of the people!"

"Yes, yes. Come to the point!"

Blair turned a little to one side so that, while seeming to face the bench, as was proper, he could still glance out at the spectators. He clasped his hands behind his back and thrust out his big head.

"Mr. Cardozo has beguiled a charitable people into decreeing that there shall be no capital punishment," he cried. "But I must ask you, all of you, what will you have in its stead?" He pointed at the grinning Tasker. "There sits our declared enemy. You have heard him pronounced a drug addict, a habitual criminal, He has already killed one of us. How many more of us will he slaughter whenever he gets bored with our coddling of him?"

"Blair!" roared Hrdlicka. He banged his gavel. "Sit down!" He raised his bulk half out of his chair. "I don't know what you're getting at, but we'll have no ranting by counsel in this court!"

"Ranting, sir? Is it ranting to ask that we stop and observe where the impractical schemes of weak men may lead us?"

"You're in contempt of this court, Counselor. That doesn't mean much — to me. But you're in contempt of the laws of your country and I won't stand for that!"

"Is it contempt to challenge a law that does not protect?"

"Ah, Judge, Your Honor . . ." the foreman of the jury, a sandy-haired, nervous man, raised a thin arm. "I think we have a right to ask Mr. Blair to tell us what he means."

"That's torn it," breathed Malory.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"If that blasted Tasker only realized what was happening to him," Cardozo groaned.

"Very well," growled Hrdlicka. "I'll let you answer the jury, Counselor."

"Thank you, sir." Blair's bow was generally in the jury's direction. "I'll be brief. Mr. Cardozo and Dr. Malory have given us some pretty generalities. Oh, they were sincere. I'm sure of that. But their words were generalities. I, on the other hand, am concerned solely with one, individual matter. The matter of David Tasker — murderer!"

"Mr. Hrdlicka!" Cardozo cried. "I object to that . . ."

"I will correct myself," Blair said smoothly. "Let me say that you are not concerned *solely* with the problem of David Tasker. But I am. For, you see, I wish to live in peace. And safety."

Blair paused, smiled thinly.

"Quiet, boy," murmured the doctor. "Don't argue with him."

"So I will confine myself to the problem of David Tasker," Blair went on. "Now, Mr. Cardozo has said that we should keep him in a sort of perpetual custody. A kindly procedure, but isn't it a bit impractical?" He was speaking directly to the audience now. "I trust that Dr. Malory will agree that he can't spend all his time with one patient. And you'll agree that you, yourself, can't personally guard one lone prisoner day and night, won't you, Mr. Cardozo? After all, we each of us have many different jobs that must be done if this community is to survive. Now, we don't have a prison as yet. Shall we stop all other building — hospital, school, sanitation system — to erect a jail for one worthless man?"

"Are you through?" Hrdlicka asked.

"Just one or two queries more. We have a very small policing force, because most of us are orderly men. So, if we follow the advice of our friends here, we, all of us, men, women — even the few children left to us — must always be on our guard to see that this *enemy* of ours doesn't break free from our weak restraint and, in his mad lust for his filthy drug, kill any of us in his way!"

Brandt Cardozo heard a confused muttering behind him. He turned. The spectators moved restlessly, huddling together, whispering. Some were staring at Tasker and their faces weren't pleasant to see. Cardozo arose.

"Your Honor," he said quietly, "I seem to be the principal target of Mr. Blair's wrath. May I remind him that I am acting according to law — the law he himself is sworn to uphold."

"Not necessarily. Mr. Blair doesn't have much regard for law. A matter I'll take up with the Council. Now, Blair, you've done a neat job of stirring us up, so sit down and be quiet."

The muttering among the spectators grew louder.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"There'll be order in this court!" roared Hrdlicka.

He waited.

The muttering did not subside.

The jury foreman coughed.

"Seems to us, the jury, that is," he was embarrassed but stubborn, "there's a lot in what he says. We ain't blaming Mr. Cardozo any — but, well, I guess we don't see how that — the prisoner can be kept locked up so that the rest of us are safe."

"That's our problem!" snapped Cardozo. "We've got to face it! And I, for one, am ready to face it! Your Honor, I wish to go on public record that I assume full responsibility for Tasker's safe custody."

"Very commendable," sneered Blair. "And after Tasker's next killing, you will send us your regrets, Mr. Cardozo?"

Someone in the back of the room stumbled to his feet and cried, "Now, look . . ."

"Silence!" roared Hrdlicka.

For the moment they all obeyed him.

"Now," said the old man, "this is your court and I'm your judge. We're here to carry out your laws. *Your* laws, remember! So let's get on with it. And no more nonsense!"

"Is it nonsense to want to protect ourselves?" cried Blair.

No muttering now, but a loud chorus of agreement.

"Look, Judge," said the foreman of the jury. The hubbub died down. "I don't know how to say it legal, but the jury thinks that, well, Tasker ought to be kicked out. And . . ." he fumbled and the juror next to him plucked his sleeve. They whispered together. "Yeah. And we want it on record that we think so." He sat down.

"But that won't do," purred Hugo Blair. "Really it won't. Suppose we do exile this fellow. Then what? Out in the hills he lurks — mad, hungry — more desperate than ever. We, in our valley, must patrol our homes both day and night. Yet, in the darkness, our few sentries will be easy enough to evade. So, we bar our doors and windows. Children are kept close to home. We huddle together. We are afraid . . . afraid of one man."

And someone in the back of the room yelled, "So kill the son of a bitch!"

Blair smiled.

Hrdlicka rose to his feet and stood, a massive, brooding figure.

"Mr. Blair," he rumbled, "I have mentioned before I am going to report your conduct to the Council. That's all I have to say to you." He looked contemptuously at the jury. "Long ago we decided that we were going to settle down on this planet and live ordered lives. Which means you can't cook up laws on the spur of the moment. You already have laws on your statute books. Those laws provide penalties for this prisoner and I am going to impose them now! David Tasker, stand up!"

Which was a mistake, Brandt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cardozo realized that immediately. The shambling figure of Tasker gave them a focus, a personification for their fear.

Some of them yelled. Hrdlicka beat on his desk with his gavel, but it was no use. Finally, somebody — probably the man who had first cried "Kill!" — started down the aisle. As Brandt Cardozo moved out to block the man, he caught a glimpse of Hugo Blair. Blair was staring at the running man and, to Cardozo's surprise, the little man was no longer smiling.

As the fellow burst among them, Cardozo reached out for him, but the other brushed on by. "Come on!" the man screamed at Blair, "let's get him now."

Blair's eyes bulged under his shaggy brows and he faltered a step backward.

"Guard!" bellowed Hrdlicka. "Arrest that man!"

Lisa Giovannetti stumbled out of her chair. The man tried to avoid her, bumped into her, and knocked her to the floor. The man stopped and looked down at her.

Cardozo saw that Blair was trembling.

"Is this what you wanted, Mr. Blair?" he asked softly.

Lisa Giovannetti tried — not very hard — to get up.

Brandt Cardozo moved swiftly over to the man, grabbed his arm, and swung him around. "Get out of here," Cardozo said clearly but not loudly, "or I'll knock you down."

The other looked at Cardozo, then down at Lisa Giovannetti. He jerked his arm free and stumbled up the aisle. People moved out of his way. Cardozo helped Lisa Giovannetti to her feet.

"Nice going," he whispered, then in normal tones he asked, "Are you hurt?"

"No . . . just awfully scared."

Brandt Cardozo looked up at Hrdlicka. The old man stood, shoulders sagging. He looked very tired.

"Your Honor," Cardozo said, "we all seem to have forgotten ourselves. I respectfully suggest you adjourn this court until we . . ."

"Until we stop acting like silly, hysterical children?" Hrdlicka rasped. "I agree. I'm ashamed. Deeply ashamed. I — never mind, court's adjourned."

There was shuffling of feet, a few started out, but most of them didn't move. They stood, uneasy, watching Hugo Blair.

The little man had recovered his poise.

"I agree with Your Honor that violence will not solve the questions raised by this trial," he said. "But I am sure that an immediate, *public* session of the Council will."

He stalked up the aisle and the people followed him, clustering close, jabbering, nodding their heads. Hrdlicka watched them as the room slowly cleared.

"All right," he said at last. "Guard, take the prisoner back to his cell. By the side door."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pierre Malory sighed. Hrdlicka stepped ponderously off his crude platform and joined the little group.

"Well, lads," he smiled without mirth at Cardozo and Malory, "there goes your fancy, progressive penal code. No capital punishment, eh?" He gestured toward Lisa Giovannetti. "One of you had better take this girl home."

"No," she said. "I'm quite all right. Really. I wasn't a bit hurt, you know."

"But you lay there — well, I'll be damned!" He beamed at her.

"She's a smart girl," grinned Cardozo. "Her little act stopped the lynching, Anthony."

"What's going to happen now?" asked the girl.

"Oh," said Hrdlicka, "that little bastard Blair will get what he wants. He'll make his point in Council just like he did today. Better get ready for a full-dress execution, Brandt, my boy."

"What has he got against you, Brandt?" asked Lisa Giovannetti. "He — he was positively venomous toward you."

"It's not me he hates," said Brandt Cardozo. "It's what I stand for."

"But they won't listen to him — they won't kill Tasker!"

"Sure they will," Cardozo nodded. "History bears him out. You see, primitive man couldn't run the risk of keeping his criminals alive —"

"But we're not primitive!"

"We've reverted. Under the excuse of necessity, of course. We just haven't got the facilities, you see. Perhaps later, when everything is lovely a few years from now. Ha! We'll never take the first step. There'll always be a Blair around to point out the difficulties . . . *and* the dangers."

They started for the door, walking slowly. Hrdlicka put a hand on Cardozo's shoulder.

"If you live as long as I have, Brandt, you'll just about lose all faith in human beings. They'll cause you nothing but grief." He patted the younger man's shoulder. "Blair . . . wish I knew what makes the little bastard tick."

"Oh," replied Cardozo, "that's simple. I found that out during the debates on our constitution and laws. It's fear. He doesn't like or trust his fellow man, so he's afraid of him."

Anthony Hrdlicka walked slowly down the dim street of the village, headed toward the river. The old man's shoulders were bowed and he puffed jerkily at the cigar clenched between his teeth. One of the planet's two little moons was already high in the sky, shining bravely among constellations uncharted, unknown. Hrdlicka picked his way easily enough along the pebbled path that took over when the street ended.

He passed the towering hulk of the *Tonia*. It was empty now and would stay where it had rammed into the alien soil, a leaning tower

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of gleaming alloy. As time passed, its former passengers would cut away its metal as they needed it and, unless they found usable ores, one day there would be nothing left of the *Tonia* but a tribal memory.

The path ended at the crude wharf they had built at the river's edge. Hrdlicka walked past a storage shed to the edge of the wharf, sat down and swung his legs over the edge. There he sat, chin in hands, elbows on knees, and stared somberly at the quiet water.

After a while he muttered, "Damn fools!"

The Council had met that afternoon. The old man grinned briefly at the memory of the battle he and Brandt Cardozo had waged before the final vote had beaten them down. Cardozo, he thought, was a damn good man . . . he would have been a great help to Hrdlicka back . . . back in those great days that would never come again. Why, and the old man's eyes lighted up as he remembered, there was that time he'd had the big fight with the government over the ownership of certain mines in Sirius III. He could have used a man like Cardozo in that deal — except Cardozo, the young romantic, would have been on the government's side. Which was all right, too, the USN lads had been a bunch of bright, tough-minded kids. Not like today's hysterical sheep, blatting after Hugo Blair . . .

He scowled at the gurgling water. And felt a brief, sharp pain under his left shoulder. Hrdlicka waited and the pain went away. He knew it would come again and again. After all, he was seventy-three. And one day they'd dig another hole in the little cemetery where most of the crew and officers of the *Tonia* now rested and . . . what would he be leaving?

He was a little surprised at himself. That he should be concerned with the brave new laws of a huddle of castaways when he had, well, not broken but certainly evaded the laws of a confederation of sixteen planets! And why should he, Anthony Hrdlicka, be worked up over the coming death of a miserable wretch who was no good to anyone? Hrdlicka's cigar had gone out, but he still puffed at it. With his usual harsh realism he began to examine the situation and himself.

There was a scuffling sound behind him and he turned, alert and wary. This planet had evidenced no intelligent life — yet. A tall figure moved cautiously out of the shadows of the shed. Hrdlicka heard the mutter of a voice and called out, "Who's there?"

The tall shadow moved closer, then spoke. "Is that Hrdlicka?"

"Yes." He squinted, then grinned broadly. "Why, it's Brandt! Welcome to the mourner's bench, lad!"

Brandt Cardozo moved nearer. Hrdlicka saw that he was frowning.

"What are you doing here?" Cardozo said.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Came down to get away from a bunch of goddam fools. Come on, boy, sit down and have a smoke. You know, we better find some kind of tobacco weed on this place or there's going to be a lot of nervous wrecks soon. I'm down to my last case of cigars myself."

"No. No, thanks." Cardozo walked to the edge of the wharf and looked quickly up and down the river. "Have you seen anyone around here?" he asked.

"No. Why?"

"Ah, never mind." Cardozo paused, then, still not looking at Hrdlicka, said, "You plan to be here much longer? It's — it's getting cool, you know."

Hrdlicka peered up at him.

"What's on your mind, son?" he asked quietly. Cardozo did not answer. Hrdlicka snapped his fingers. "I know! *I'm* the goddam fool! You're worryin' about the execution."

"There'll be no execution."

"Eh? What did you say?"

"I said, there will be no execution!"

Hrdlicka scrunched backward until his feet were on the wharf. Then, with considerable grunting, he hauled himself erect. He stood, hands on hips, staring at Brandt Cardozo. He took the cold cigar from his mouth and tossed it into the river.

"You'd better explain yourself."

Brandt Cardozo still looked out at the river.

"There'll be no execution because I won't stand for it. You might as well know I've got Tasker over there in the shed. I'm taking him down the river on a cotton-weed raft."

"Well . . . I'll be —"

Brandt Cardozo half turned and gazed steadily at the old man.

"There's no use arguing," he said coldly.

"I'm not going to argue. I assume you know what you're doing."

"I do. I know that these people," he jerked a hand back toward the sleeping village, "took a look at their future and made one of the best codes man has ever dreamed up in his nine-thousand-year history. Today, these same people got scared — and the ape scampered back up the tree."

"You know," Hrdlicka grunted, "sometimes I think you make too many speeches."

"Could be." Cardozo took a step toward the shed. "Better get out of here, Anthony. There'll be hell to pay in the morning. And when our Mr. Blair gets his mob organized, you'll be the first one he goes after. I don't want you bothered for my . . . crimes."

"You're really leaving?"

"Certainly. I've got to stick with the poor devil until the drug wears off. And anyway . . ." Brandt Cardozo shrugged and took another step toward the shed.

"In my time," Hrdlicka said, moving with him, "I got a lot of things done. And I got them done

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by cutting my losses sometimes and starting in all over again."

"Please get going, Anthony. I must be on my way and I don't want to get rough with you."

"Is it that you can't take the idea of — of — well, executing the fellow?"

"Look, my friend!" Cardozo grabbed Hrdlicka by an arm and swung him around. They faced each other. "The first warden of the Pluto house hated executions. Whenever he could, he'd pass the dirty business on to me, as the next in rank. In my time I've supervised the legal killing of some thirty men and two women. Now, leave or stay, whichever you like, but don't interfere."

He stalked over to the shed.

"Come on out, Tasker," Brandt Cardozo said. "And keep it quiet."

Hrdlicka opened his mouth, closed it, and walked away. Tasker slouched out of the shed, bundles in his arms. Brandt Cardozo stood still, listening to the sound of Hrdlicka's feet on the rough planks of the platform. He waited until the sound changed as Hrdlicka reached the pebbled path. Then he walked into the shed and picked up another bundle. When he came out, Tasker stood at the edge of the landing, grinning.

"We'll take the downstream raft," Cardozo said. "Jump aboard and I'll hand the stuff down to you."

Tasker squatted and looked down. "It's a big jump, pal. Better give me a hand."

"All right, but hurry!"

"No hurry, chum. We got all the time in the world."

Brandt Cardozo stopped, his arm half extended to the condemned man.

"Don't you really know what we're doing?" he asked softly.

"You said we was making a break. You seem to be taking it okay. So what?"

"But don't you know why, really?"

Tasker shrugged.

"You're a queer boy," he said. "One minute you say rush it, the next you stop to do a lot of gabbing. Okay by me. Whatever you want."

"Never mind," Brandt Cardozo sighed. "Give me your hand."

They clasped hands and Tasker swung his legs out over the bobbing raft. Cardozo braced, Tasker let go with his other hand and landed on the raft. Cardozo let go and saw Tasker sway, then spread his feet wide apart. In a moment Tasker had his balance and stood secure on the wobbly raft.

Brandt Cardozo picked up a bundle. He had gathered together as few essentials as possible, a rough first-aid kit, some food concentrates, a few extra clothes. He himself was armed with a handgun and two knives. Later, when the man was more his normal self, Cardozo planned to give Tasker a knife. He had not looked into the future beyond that.

Cardozo tossed one bundle down, Tasker caught it, dropped it in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

center of the raft. Another bundle was passed.

"Lay them carefully, damn it!" Cardozo snapped.

"Okay, okay."

Cardozo had picked up the last bundle when he heard a voice call softly, "Brandt! Oh, Brandt!"

He let go the bundle and drew his gun. A man came toward him across the landing and he saw it was Pierre Malory. Brandt Cardozo did not lower his gun.

"Take it easy, Malory," he said.

Malory came closer. He was smiling.

"I'm alone, Brandt. I don't plan to start anything, so you can put the gun away."

Brandt Cardozo did not move.

"Hrdlicka came to me," Malory went on in a conversational tone. "When he told me your plan, I thought I'd come along and say goodby." He glanced down at the raft. "Ah, Tasker. How are you feeling?"

"Fine. How else?"

"You won't feel that way much longer, I think. Brandt, I don't believe you know the symptoms of withdrawal. Morbid depression accompanied by extreme fatigue. He won't be much good to you for some time. For just how long, I don't know."

"Please go," Brandt Cardozo said flatly.

"Very well. But I did want to say goodby, Brandt, and wish you luck."

"Psychology, eh!"

"Not at all. It would do you no good. When the thoughtful, contemplative type, like you, finally breaks into violent action, nothing can stop it during the period of such action."

"I'm glad you realize that. Here you go, Tasker."

Gun still in his right hand, he picked up the last bundle and tossed it down to the waiting Tasker. Then he went over to the mooring chain.

"Hell! I forgot this was locked!" He hesitated a moment, fingering the chain, then turned to look at Malory. "I'm going to burn this lock, Pierre. If you try anything, I'll . . ."

"I won't try anything!" Malory sounded exasperated. "Go ahead, burn the lock. But don't get so wound up that you forget your manners. Hrdlicka was hurt that you had no word for him. That tough old man is very fond of you, Brandt."

"He left before I — oh, the devil with it! Tell the old guy cheerio for me, Pierre. You too, guy."

"I will. Mind telling me your plans?"

When Cardozo hesitated, Malory smiled and said, "I'll tell them to Hugo Blair first thing in the morning!"

"I'm sorry. We'll just float down the river as far as we want to, I guess. Then, fish and hunt, live as best we can. I don't think anyone will chase us. It's the cotton season

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and they'll need the other raft. We should learn something about this planet, eh?"

"Let me know when you guys finish your gab," Tasker remarked and sat down on the logs of the raft.

"Shut up, you!" Cardozo barked.

He turned back to Malory. "You don't approve," he challenged.

"It's not that," Malory said thoughtfully. "It's something like watching another doctor treat a patient. His treatment is not what I, myself, would prescribe but, on the other hand, I realize it may work. So, it's not for me to say anything."

"I'm not treating anyone!"

"Oh." Malory thrust his hands in his pockets and gazed down at the planks. "I thought you were," he said after a while.

"What the devil do you mean?"

"I thought you were treating our community. For hysteria."

"To hell with our community! I'm saving a man's life!"

"Hrdlicka was right, then. You know, I'm convinced that old gentleman is *never* wrong. Well, cheerio."

Hands still in his pockets, Pierre Malory turned his back to Cardozo.

"Wait!" Brandt Cardozo cried.

Malory paused, looked over his shoulder.

"You'd better move, Brandt. The night's getting on."

"Tell me what you mean first!"

"It's simple enough. This town's temporarily sick. I'd diagnose its ailment as an acute case of Blair poisoning. Isn't it up to you to give it an antidote?"

"Up to me! I'm finished with that bunch of idiots! You heard them at the Council meeting!"

"I did. There were some extremists, of course."

"Yes, indeed there were! And how about the others. I suppose you approve of them?"

"I don't. Their behavior was abnormal. It was also fairly orderly. And quite legal."

"Legal? My dear doctor, do you consider it legal to sentence a man to death under an *ex post facto* law?"

"You have me there, Brandt. Yet . . . don't forget this is a frontier, and frontier people seldom bother to make the effort our community made today. Legally, Tasker can't die and you and I know it. But a majority of the people have condemned him, so die he must."

"Majority! A bunch of frantic cows mooing after a mad bull!"

"You're shouting, Brandt."

"I — sorry."

Brandt Cardozo drew a deep breath. He looked down at his hands. They were shaking and sweaty. He was surprised to see that he still held his gun. He quickly thrust it into his holster.

"I apologize, Pierre. Thought I'd done all my shouting this afternoon."

A loud snore came up from the raft.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brandt Cardozo gasped, then ran back and looked over the wharf's edge.

"Christ!" he breathed. "He's asleep! Tasker's gone to sleep, Pierre!"

"Why not? Right now Tasker is incapable of worry."

They were quiet for a moment. The rhythmic snoring sounded over the soft murmur of the river.

"You'd better get going," Malory said. "Somebody just might hear that." He took a step. "Oh. By the way, Brandt. You did leave a message for the Council? Your resignation, that sort of thing?"

"No, I did not!" Brandt Cardozo said defiantly. "I owe them nothing! I'm leaving them — I'm going to save Tasker's life and be damned to them!"

"Very well. I shall make whatever explanations I see fit."

"When? To whom?"

"Tomorrow morning. To Blair, most likely. He'll take over completely, for Hrdlicka and I — as your supporters — will be discredited, of course. And strongly suspected of helping Tasker escape. Ah, well . . . Anthony can handle his problems and I'll try to manage mine."

"You think I'm letting you down," Cardozo muttered.

"My dear fellow, it doesn't matter what I think."

Brandt Cardozo licked his sweaty lips.

"Don't go," he said thickly.

"Why not?"

"I want you to help me get Tasker back to his cell. Will you?"

"Why?"

"I'm not sure . . ."

"It's no good if you're just doing it for Hrdlicka or for me. Or for yourself."

"Well, who the hell else would I do it for!"

Malory gestured briefly.

"For all of us."

"For Tasker, too?"

"I'm sorry — terribly sorry, but Tasker doesn't matter any more. Really he doesn't, Brandt."

"Damn it, Pierre . . . all right, you're my doctor. Help me."

Pierre Malory searched his pockets for a cigarette, found one, and lit it. He smoked slowly as a man does who smokes solely for taste and not for nervous sustenance.

Finally he said, "I honestly can't help you, Brandt. You are the doer now."

"Blast it!" Cardozo strode to the edge and frowned down at the snoring Tasker. "I was doing something. Doing it for Tasker."

"No."

"Eh?"

"You were doing it for none other than Brandt Cardozo. The emotional, embittered, Brandt Cardozo."

"Now, look — oh. I see . . ."

"Tasker was Blair's scapegoat. Tasker was Brandt Cardozo's excuse."

"For acting the fool!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Not precisely the fool. Put it in reverse. Tasker was your excuse for *not* acting as Brandt Cardozo, the penologist, the responsible servant of the people of the New World."

"I tried that. And lost."

"Well, then, cut your losses."

"The old man said that. I don't know . . . I don't believe in capital punishment, Pierre. It just doesn't do any good. I told the people that. And they listened — until that damned Blair . . ."

"Tell them again."

"A voice crying in the wilderness? Not me."

"That's the voice that won't rephrase its message. Tell the people in another way."

"Another way? What do you mean?"

"I am treating a patient. Sometimes I soothe him. Sometimes I reason with him. And once in a while I bawl the hell out of him! But all the time I am saying the same thing to him. Over and over. In different ways."

Brandt Cardozo stood for a time, looking down at the raft where Tasker lay sprawled on his back. After a while he nodded.

"Ever see an execution, Pierre?" Cardozo's voice was very cold.

"No."

"You will. Now — please help me get Tasker back to his cell."

"Certainly." Malory looked curiously at his friend. "What are you going to do now, Brandt?"

"I'm going to treat my sick community, Dr. Malory. This time, I'm going to try shock treatment. . . ."

The four-man procession clumped stolidly across the floor of the warehouse, reached the big door that led to the loading yard, and stopped.

"Open the door, Vanni," Brandt Cardozo ordered.

Tasker's cell had been a small room in the warehouse, the one permanent structure they had completed. Vanni, a stocky machinist's mate, stepped from where he stood by the bound Tasker, swung a clumsy lockbar out of its slot, and pushed the heavy door open.

The four men moved out into the loading yard. Their pace faltered.

"What's the matter?" Cardozo growled. "Keep it moving. Fast!"

"Uh . . . that it?" mumbled the other guard, McCann, a one-time video scenesetter. His narrow shoulders shook a little.

"That's it. And the sooner we get there, the sooner it will be over."

At the far end of the yard stood a bark-covered, newly sawed post about eight feet high. Ten feet from it stood five men, four with flame rifles. The fifth, medical bag in hand, was Dr. Malory. Several yards behind them, in four ragged rows, stood some fifty-odd members of the community.

As they marched to the post, Brandt Cardozo checked the silent witnesses. Hrdlicka stood calm — by Cardozo's request in the first row — the sandy-haired jury fore-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man beside him. Arrayed on either side of those two were members of the jury and at the extreme end of the line, away from the post, stood Lisa Giovannetti.

At that moment an unidentified man slipped furtively into the first row and stood, eager eyes flickering from Tasker to the post and back again. Brandt Cardozo sighed. There was always at least one of those. . . . Always a twisted sadist, savoring another human being's terror and death.

He shrugged. Perhaps even that would help. Make it even worse for the others.

For this was his shock treatment . . . a *public* execution.

After the Council had revoked the law forbidding the death penalty and instituted capital punishment, it had hurriedly decreed that all details of an execution be left to the discretion of the penologist.

So Brandt Cardozo had ordered that all officials of the sentencing court should be present at any execution . . . as well as no less than 35 members of the public. He further stipulated that any other adult resident of the community could attend if he or she so desired.

Cardozo checked them off in his mind . . . no women . . . a good sign. He scowled suddenly.

"Halt!" he barked.

Tasker's escort stopped. They were very near the post. Cardozo strode over and ranged himself in front of the witnesses. "Where's Citizens' Counsel Blair?" he snapped.

Heads turned. There were a few whispers. Feet shuffled. The whispering grew into an audible murmur.

"I requested all court officers to be assembled at least twenty minutes before the time for execution."

"Um. Blair doesn't seem to be present," Hrdlicka murmured.

Cardozo forced all expression from his voice. "The Citizens' Counsel cannot evade the responsibilities of his office. Nor will this execution proceed without him."

He turned toward the firing squad.

"Grover!" he called. A rifleman left the line and trotted up to him.

"Yes, sir?"

"Go out in the town, locate Counselor Blair, bring him here. On the double! You are to use force if necessary."

Grover saluted and ran off.

Brandt Cardozo turned back and stared hard at the witnesses. It was apparent that the resentment on their faces was not toward him. But . . . it couldn't matter, now.

"I am sorry," he told them formally. "The execution of David Tasker, if it proceeds according to law, must be delayed for a few moments."

He turned his back on them and walked stiffly over to the little cluster of men that was the condemned and his killers.

Tasker jerked his head up and looked about him. Then he seemed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to notice, for the first time, that his arms were bound.

"Hey!" His voice was uncertain, worried. "What's going on here?"

Malory cleared his throat.

"What's going on, I said!"

"You are about to die by shooting for the murder of Leon Jacoby," Cardozo said quietly. "If you can understand spiritual counsel, Tasker, ask for it now. As soon as Citizens' Counsel Blair gets here, I'll read you the death warrant and —"

"Death warrant!"

Tasker screamed.

Then he struggled so violently that, for a moment, he broke loose from Vanni's grip. Dragging McCann with him, he staggered toward Cardozo.

"You said . . ." he screamed. "You said — they wasn't gonna be no pill-box — no gas!"

Malory moved, but Vanni was faster. The guard regained his grip on Tasker's writhing arm and helped McCann pull the twisting, gasping killer to a stop.

"Take it easy, Dave," Vanni panted. "This is no good, fella —"

"Don't kill me!" Tasker babbled. "You said they was no killings — I remember — the girl told me — now, please, please — get my mouthpiece, I gotta right to an appeal — it's against the law —"

"I told you yesterday that the law had been changed. Made retroactive . . . not that you know what that big word means. I told you there was no hope, Tasker."

"I was doped. Oh, my God . . ."

"Jesus Christ," muttered McCann.

"It won't hurt, Dave," soothed Vanni. His voice lacked conviction.

"Please, please — Vanni — we was pals on the ship —"

Hrdlicka stepped forward from his line.

"Brandt! Can't you do something?"

McCann and Vanni were now wrestling with the screaming Tasker. Despite his bound arms, the condemned was battling furiously, hunching his shoulders and lunging bull-like in every direction. Tossing appearances to the winds, Vanni climbed on Tasker's back and tried to put on a half-nelson. But Tasker still screamed.

Cardozo bowed to Hrdlicka.

"Prisoners sometimes become violently hysterical when death gets this close to them, Your Honor," he said politely.

"It's more than that!" snapped Malory. "The dakarine has worn *off*, Brandt!"

"You've got to do something!" Hrdlicka cried, his heavy rumble gone. "This — this is dreadful!"

"I don't wanna die!" With a mighty frenzy, Tasker threw off Vanni, wrenched free from McCann, flung himself on the ground before Cardozo. "Please," he began to crawl, "you got no right — I shouldn't have to die — I been a sick man — *please!*"

"Do something, for Christ's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sake!" McCann screamed suddenly.

"I've been afraid of this," Malory said, his quiet voice strangely sedate, "I have a narcotic, if the penologist permits . . ."

Cardozo stared down at the groveling Tasker. Now — it was really quite true — the poor wretch was no more than a symbol, a postulate in an argument.

He nodded his head.

The guards hauled Tasker to his feet and managed to hold him quiet while Dr. Malory administered a hypodermic. Tasker sighed, then went limp. His head bobbled, then his whole body leaned forward a little as the two guards held him upright.

Cardozo felt, rather than heard a gusty sigh of relief from the witnesses.

At that moment Blair trotted in, Grover a pace behind him, his rifle aimed at Blair's back.

"What's the meaning of this?" cried the little man. He pranced up to Brandt Cardozo. "I shall report this outrage! This man broke into my room — menaced me with a gun —"

"Mr. Blair! Lower your voice, please. You are in the presence of a man about to die."

"Uh — yes. Sorry. But —"

"Mr. Blair, you were required by law to attend this execution. Your tardiness has distressed everyone. Now, please take your proper place among the witnesses so that we can get this business over with."

"I was indisposed!" Blair bridled. "And further, sir, I will not be driven about at gunpoint." He saw the slumping Tasker. "What's he doing? More dramatics?"

Cardozo waited the barest fraction of a pause. Malory sensed the urgency, turned to Blair and said, with completely professional detachment, "Oh — my doing, Mr. Citizens' Counselor. The dakarine wore off, as I prognosed, you'll remember, and the condemned man was frightened into hysterics. With Mr. Cardozo's permission, I gave him a shot. He's unconscious, doesn't know what's about to happen. . . . That doesn't matter, of course."

"But it does!" Blair shrilled. "The condemned man must —"

A loud, disjointed cry from the witnesses cut him off. He gaped a little, looked uncertainly about him, was checked when Brandt Cardozo raised his hand. The crowd quieted.

Hrdlicka very ostentatiously stepped back into line.

There was quiet.

"Grover," said Brandt Cardozo.

"Yes, sir?"

"If Counselor Blair does not take his proper place among the witnesses — immediately — you will put him there."

Blair, very pale now, glanced at Tasker, then shot a look at Brandt Cardozo. From Cardozo his gaze flickered to the stark post. His pallor became a little greenish. Then he hurried over to the group of spectators. Two jurors gave him room.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Take your place with the firing squad, Grover," Cardozo ordered. "All right, Vanni — McCann — tie him up there."

They walked Tasker over to the post and strapped him to it. He leaned stiffly forward, straps restraining him at his knees, waist and shoulders.

Cardozo stepped in front of him and lifted the death warrant. It had been scribed on a sheet of the *Tonia*'s notepaper by the one battered salvaged portable.

He read it slowly, then, moving deliberately, stepped back and a few paces to one side.

"The sentence of death will now be carried out," he said loudly. "Ready!"

The squad lifted their rifles.

"Aim."

"Fire."

There was a hiss of blue flame.

Tasker's dirty shirt smoked suddenly, his body jerked and he slumped even more.

Cardozo beckoned to Malory and the two of them strode over to the post. The doctor put fingers to Tasker's wrist. After an endless moment he took them away. His voice wasn't quite steady as he said, "I pronounce this man dead."

There was a thud behind them. Malory and Cardozo jerked their heads around and saw Hugo Blair lying on the ground, face downward. Malory moved uncertainly.

"Leave him be," a juror called out. "He's just passed out."

Cardozo stared a moment at the fidgeting witnesses, then said, "The execution of David Tasker has been carried out as prescribed by the law of the New World. You will please leave the place of execution immediately, in a quiet and orderly manner."

They all started toward the yard-gate, walking fast. One or two looked down at Blair as they passed him. One man suddenly put his hand to his mouth, gazed frantically about him, then ran for the gate.

No one laughed at him.

Brandt Cardozo saw that none of the silent crowd stepped any nearer to the unconscious Blair than they had to.

CORRECTION

Last month we announced that our June issue would carry the first installment of Alfred Bester's fine new novel, "The Burning Spear." We're sorry to report now that editorial considerations have made it necessary to delay publication for the time being. We will bring you word on our new plans as soon as they are definite, and we offer our present, deeply felt apologies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this month's Recommended Reading, *you'll find a review of one of last year's oddest and most interesting books of science, in a way, fiction; James Helvick's* OVERDRAFT ON GLORY. *Now James Helvick is one of several pseudonyms for Claud Cockburn; and Claud Cockburn is, at least to my own palate, the funniest regular contributor to* Punch. *Most of his* Punch *pieces are non-fiction, askew glimpses of fact set down in a prose with a uniquely unexpected rhythm; but here is one of Cockburn's rare bits of short fiction — which may lead you to ask if American society would have fared any better than British under the incredulous scrutiny of the Martian Colonel.*

The Incredulity of Colonel Mumph

by CLAUD COCKBURN

ALMOST ALL, AND CERTAINLY ALL the very best, of the people who really were working for our Intelligence Agencies escaped, one is happy to say. Charges of "collaboration" subsequently bruited are ridiculous. They had their job to do, and they did it. The fact that one of them acted as Under-Secretary of a Department of the Martian Government is neither here nor there. He was at work.

And when the Martians finally were pushed off the planet his report on their attitude, what we term their "mentality," was very illuminating indeed. It proved absolutely that their attitude and mentality were not very nice. It was one of those things we needed to know.

The people who really got it in, if one may say so, the neck (reminiscently of that man in Japan, much earlier, who said truthfully but incredibly that he genuinely and absolutely was merely paid by the British Council to get the Japanese public thinking seriously about the Baconian theory) were a lot of chaps who, because they were not being paid from the Secret Fund, thought it was all right for them to explain to the Martians — once it was evident that they had taken over — what they were "really doing."

It didn't — and this is the startling and terrible thing we have learned about Martian mentality — really work. To put it crudely, the Mar-

Reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of PUNCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tians didn't believe a word of it. They claimed it was a cock and bull story. That was what they had the barbarity to say to our chaps — M.P.s, Publicity Agents, Trade Union officials, Heads of Boards, and so on — standing there in the dock and telling the simple truth.

You could see the way things were going to go, sense the non-understanding quality of these Martians right from the moment of the first investigation of Earthian Colonel Humph by Martian Colonel Mumph.

Colonel Humph explained, very straightforwardly, that what he did for a living was — being an ex-Padre — act as adviser on sex to a Sunday newspaper, and he stated that they paid him £2,750 per annum for so doing.

Mumph, a barbarian if ever I saw one, at this point lost his temper and started to yell hysterically. What he really said one does not, naturally, know, but what the interpreter said he said was: "Cheese it, you oaf. That can't be. Come again."

Humph, maintaining dignity, tried to explain about the relationship of the British Press to Sex and all that — and he even said his piece about Graham Greene and such — but it was no good with Mumph. Mumph said it was evident that all this was an impudent imposture, and that Humph must really be paid by the Secret Fund.

And no sooner had Humph been carried out protesting than here on the stand — the trials took place at Tintern Abbey — was Colonel Sumph, who said that he had nothing whatever to conceal, no connection of any kind with any sort of secret fund. He was simply paid £8,000 per annum for seeing to it that British coal production went up and up, and that everyone in that industry was happy and hard-working.

Mumph's face was, as they say, a study. He thought, and later he said, that Sumph was being so impudent that he deserved to be atomized right away. He controlled himself, however, and started a long interrogation about the coal situation. Was more coal really being produced? Was the price going down all the time the way it was supposed to do when they first gave Sumph the job? Were relations between the Government, the miners, and the consumers of this product noticeably better than they had been before Sumph took over?

Of course Sumph said of course not. And he pointed out, very rightly, that if conditions had been such that anything like that could possibly have happened it would have been entirely unnecessary to have a Coal Board in the first place.

Sumph, one is bitterly sorry to report, passed away in the notorious Slave Labour Camp at Selsey Bill.

Colonel Lumph — who at that time really was Chairman of the Arts Council, and said as much to this Mumph — was the next of our fel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lows to appear, and I am afraid it was somewhat of a bad show. Lumph said that what he got paid for was organizing exhibitions. And Mumph said "As for instance?" So Lumph said "Well, as for instance with wire. Pieces of wire, and then the newspaper men are on the telephone and you say such and such. Good publicity, you know," Lumph said.

Once again Mumph flatly refused to believe our man's story. It was, he said, a patent and barefaced lie. And then he got into a tremendous huff and said that so far as he could see all the British prisoners were telling bare-faced lies.

Was it, he asked, even credible, let alone likely, that the British public really was paying all these people to do the things they said they were doing?

Mumph ran through a file of names, and he named a leading publisher who claimed he existed without support of any kind from the Secret Fund, and a couple of lawyers who, although none of their clients had benefited by so much as a halfpenny from their activities, still stuck to it that they got paid for what they did at what they described as "The Bar" and not from the Secret Fund.

Mumph had them dragged out of the Court immediately and they were in Selsey Bill before you could say Jack Robinson.

Bumph, at that time Chairman of the Trade Union Council, tried to put up a bit of a stand — actually seemed to believe that Mumph would believe his story that the T.U.C. really thought him worth his money, and thus put up his annual salary, without reference to the Secret Fund.

By this time the trial was getting big headlines on Mars, and Mumph thought Bumph was good value from this point of view and kept him at it — asked all sorts of crazy sounding questions such as What does a British Trade Union really do? And if that's what you say you do why the devil should anyone pay you for doing it?

Bumph, taken aback because he hadn't realized what Martian mentality is really like, at once got tied up in some fearful lot of rot about the Tolpuddle Martyrs — Gaitskell and all that lot — and it was quite a while before Mumph could call the whole gathering to order and say "Look here, Bumph, be good enough to tell us just exactly what you are in favour of and against what you are."

Bumph at once issued a protest to the United Planets — UPO it was called in those days — and said he reserved his defence. So they shot him down to Selsey Bill, and that was the last anyone saw of him.

There is, unfortunately, no need to remind anyone of what happened just after that when a man got up and said that, contrary to report and rumour, he was not paid by the Secret Fund to work against the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Martians but was simply a man paid to organize what he described, rather foolishly, as "commercial" television shows in the country. He stated that he was paid to do this.

Mumph's patience was by this time finally at breaking point. He told this man — whose name was Trumph — to describe in exact detail, under threat of immediate torture and execution, the alleged workings of the British television business.

Trumph, utterly misled by Mumph's bland manner, went to it. He really did tell the story of what the television business thought it was up to.

Selsey Bill.

You know and I know what happened next — and there is no need to recount here the story of how those Martians finally succumbed to the forces of etc., etc., etc.

Yet to-day, as you walk with head erect and a madrigal in your heart from place to place, spare an occasional thought for those inmates of the hospital — those emaciated publishers, those nearly wrecked M.P.s and the others — who miraculously survived the brief period of the dominancy of Colonel Mumph.

NEVER, EVER BEFORE, ANYWHERE!

7000 fantasy and science-fiction books and back-issue magazines at 50% to 90% under what they've cost you before, here or anywhere, while they last! LIST FREE.

WEREWOLF BOOKSHOP
Shannon Rd., R.D. 2, Box 86-J
Verona, Pennsylvania

SOVIET SCIENCE FICTION!

A limited number of imported copies available for the first time to the American reader. This book, STORIES by Yefremov, is an amazing new experience. It is a must for any reader of Science Fiction. Nine complete stories by a leading Russian Scientist, hard cover, and eight full color, full page illustrations! Read a Russian version of a visit from outer space! While they last, send $3.00 cash, check or money order to:

PETER TAILOR
22 East 17th Street
New York City 3, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

READERS' BOOK SERVICE

Below is a list of many of the most important science fiction books of the past year which you may now order postpaid through F&SF. In addition, you may order any hard-cover book reviewed in this magazine during the past year. (Sorry, but we cannot offer this service on paper-bound books.)

NOVELS

94 THE END OF ETERNITY
Isaac Asimov
Doubleday **$2.95**

95 THE LONG TOMORROW
Leigh Brackett
Doubleday **$2.95**

103 MARTIANS, GO HOME
Fredric Brown
Dutton **$2.75**

58 EARTHLIGHT Arthur C. Clarke
Ballantine **$2.75**

114 THE CITY AND THE STARS
Arthur C. Clarke
Harcourt, Brace **$3.75**

115 OVERDRAFT ON GLORY
James Helvick
Lippincott **$3.95**

90 NOT THIS AUGUST
C. M. Kornbluth
Doubleday **$2.95**

116 GOOD AS GOLD
Alfred Toombs
Crowell **$3.50**

67 THE MOUSE THAT ROARED
Leonard Wibberley
Little, Brown **$3.50**

79 RE-BIRTH John Wyndham
Ballantine **$2.00**

FANTASY NOVELS

75 TWO TOWERS J. R. R. Tolkien
Houghton-Mifflin **$5.00**

ANTHOLOGIES

118 SCIENCE-FICTION ADVENTURES IN MUTATION
Groff Conklin
Vanguard **$3.75**

71 TERROR IN THE MODERN VEIN Donald A. Wollheim
Hanover **$3.95**

SHORT STORIES

84 THE MARTIAN WAY & OTHER STORIES
Isaac Asimov
Doubleday **$2.95**

99 FAR AND AWAY
Anthony Boucher
Ballantine **$2.00**

104 THE OCTOBER COUNTRY
Ray Bradbury
Ballantine **$3.50**

100 ANOTHER KIND Chad Oliver
Ballantine **$2.00**

62 OTHER PLACE J. B. Priestley
Harper **$3.00**

74 THE DEVIL'S PRETTY DAUGHTER & OTHER OZARK FOLK TALES Vance Randolph
Columbia University **$3.75**

87 NIGHTMARES OF EMINENT PERSONS Bertrand Russell
Simon & Schuster **$3.00**

117 CITIZENS IN SPACE
Robert Sheckley
Ballantine **$2.00**

NON-FICTION

105 MYTH OR LEGEND?
G. E. Daniel & Others
Macmillan **$2.50**

82 INQUIRY INTO SCIENCE-FICTION Basil Davenport
Longmans, Green **$2.50**

102 THE ABOMINABLE SNOW-MAN Ralph Izzard
Doubleday **$4.00**

88 SALAMANDERS AND OTHER WONDERS Willy Ley
Viking **$3.95**

119 THE VIKING ROCKET STORY Milton W. Rosen
Harper **$3.75**

76 THE EXPLORATION OF THE MOON
R. A. Smith & A. C. Clarke
Harper **$2.50**

57 WHO'S WHO IN OZ Jack Snow
Reilly & Lee **$3.75**

66 PHYSICS OF PLANET MARS
Gerard de Vaucouleurs
Macmillan **$10.00**

106 THE MOON: A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION
H. Percy Wilkins & Patrick Moore
Macmillan **$12.00**

41 INDEX TO THE SCIENCE-FICTION MAGAZINES 1926–1950 Donald B. Day
Perri **$6.50**

UNCLASSIFIABLE

113 AGE OF THE TAIL
H. Allen Smith
Little, Brown **$3.00**

JUVENILES

72 SWITCH ON THE NIGHT
Ray Bradbury
Pantheon **$2.50**

110 STAR GUARD Andre Norton
Harcourt, Brace **$3.00**

80 UNDERSEA QUEST
Frederik Pohl & Jack Williamson
Gnome **$2.50**

81 VENUS BOY Lee Sutton
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard **$2.50**

73 SPACE CAT VISITS VENUS
Ruthven Todd
Scribner's **$2.00**

111 EXPLORING THE MOON
Roy A. Gallant
Garden City **$2.00**

112 GOLDEN BOOK OF ASTRONOMY
Rose Wyler & Gerald Ames
illustrated by John Polgreen
Simon & Schuster **$3.95**

HUMOR

107 THE POGO PEEK-A-BOOK
108 POTLUCK POGO Walt Kelly
Simon & Schuster each **$1.00**

109 GEORGE PRICE'S CHARACTERS
Simon & Schuster **$2.95**

I have circled below the numbers listed alongside the books I wish to order. ☐

I would also like to order other books reviewed in F&SF during the past year which do not appear on the above list. I am enclosing a separate sheet of paper containing the title, author, publisher and price of each book. ☐ (Sorry, this offer is not good on paper-bound books.)

I am enclosing a check ☐ money order ☐ (no cash or stamps) in the amount of $_____ and understand that the books will be sent me postpaid.

41 57 58 62 66 67 71 72 73 74 75 76 79 80 81 82 84 87 88 90 94 95 99 100 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*City*_____ *Zone*_____ *State*_____

F-APR-6

READERS' BOOK SERVICE, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, 471 Park Ave., N. Y. 22, N

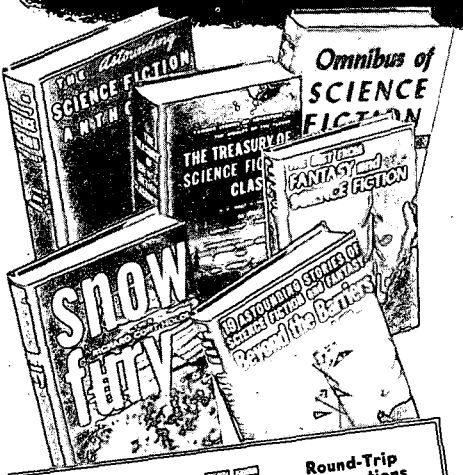
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Any 2 of These Great SCIENCE FICTION CLASSICS

(VALUES UP TO $6.45)

FREE

WITH MEMBERSHIP


SCIENCE FICTION
THE TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION CLASSICS
Omnibus of SCIENCE FICTION
FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION
SNOW fury
19 ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SCIENCE-FICTION GREATNESS

YES, you can have your choice of any TWO of these exciting books absolutely FREE simply by joining this new kind of book club *now*. They're all masterpieces by top-flight authors—packed with rocket-fast stories!

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION ANTHOLOGY
A story about the first A-bomb, written *before* it was invented! Another about the machine that shows "news-reels" of any past event. PLUS more than 20 other "bests" of the past decade!

TREASURY OF SCIENCE-FICTION CLASSICS
FOUR famous novels; a complete play; scores of all-time great S-F stories, including H. G. Wells' "Invasion from Mars," made famous by Orson Welles' hoax "newscast."

OMNIBUS OF SCIENCE-FICTION
43 classic stories by top authors. Wonders of Earth and Man. Amazing inventions. Space travel and visitors from outer space. Adventures in dimension. 502 pages!

BEST FROM FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION
(Current Series). The girl whose tortured mind is bombarded by the thought waves of other people. The synthetic creature that goes "berserk" at high temperatures. And many others.

SNOW FURY
by Richard Holden
When an unseasonal blizzard hits a tiny area of New England, the "snow" that moves *against* the wind and *doesn't melt* starts killing people! Millions are doomed by this menace!

BEYOND THE BARRIERS OF SPACE AND TIME
edited by Judith Merril
A new collection of 19 superb tales of fantasy—the supernatural — mass hypnosis — telepathy — etc.

Plus 2 FREE Round-Trip Reservations to the MOON!

On this big Science-Fiction Club offer you get TWO Round-Trip Reservations to the Moon FREE (see description on other side for full details)—PLUS any TWO of these great Science-Fiction books FREE by simply joining the Club *at once* and choosing your first selection from the six books shown here. Actually, you get THREE books—values up to $10.50 in publishers' editions—for only $1.00. Rush coupon now!

SEND NO MONEY Just Mail Coupon

Your choice of ANY 2 of the new Science-Fiction masterpieces described here—FREE Plus TWO FREE Round-Trip Reservations To The Moon. (See Other Side.) Every month, you will be offered the "cream" of the new $2.50 and $3.50 Science-Fiction books—for only $1. You take only those books you really want—as few as four a year. This offer may have to be withdrawn. So mail coupon RIGHT NOW to:

SCIENCE-FICTION BOOK CLUB
Dept. MFSF-4, Garden City, N. Y.

FREE GIFT COUPON

SCIENCE-FICTION BOOK CLUB
Dept. MFSF-4, Garden City, N. Y.

Please rush the 3 books checked below, as my gift books and first selection. Bill me only $1 for all 3 (plus shipping charge), and enroll me as a member. Every month send free bulletin describing coming selection. For each book I accept, I will pay only $1 plus shipping. I need take only 4 books during each year I am a member and may resign at any time after accepting 4 selections.

GUARANTEE: If not delighted, I may return all books in 7 days, pay nothing and this membership will be cancelled.

- ☐ **Astounding Anthology**
- ☐ **Beyond the Barriers**
- ☐ **Best from Fantasy and Science-Fiction**
- ☐ **Omnibus of SF**
- ☐ **Snow Fury**
- ☐ **Treasury of Science-Fiction Classics**

Name_____ (Please Print)

Address_____

City_____ Zone____ State_____

Selection price in Canada $1.10 plus shipping. Address Science-Fiction Club, 105 Bond St., Toronto 2.
(Offer good only in U.S. and Canada)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GIVEN to Readers of Fantasy and Science Fiction!

2 FREE ROUND-TRIP RESERVATIONS to the MOON!

TWO Bonafide Certificates of Your Space-Pioneer Spirit— to Share with an Adventurous Friend!

YES, now for the first time we are offering FREE, not one—but TWO bonafide Moon-Tour Reservations so that you may share this proof of your space-pioneer spirit with a friend!

Each reservation certifies that you are among the first to apply for passage to the moon. *Neither in any way commits the holder to make the voyage.* They simply signify that your name and the friend's name you submit are being held on file in Science-Fiction Book Club archives to be turned over to the first commercial company making trips to the moon.

Your reservations include many amazing facts: your actual weight on the moon, a Rocket-Ship schedule, etc. Like your interest in Science-Fiction books, the hard-back, wallet-size certificate will be evidence of your adventurous spirit...your imagination ...*your interest in the world of tomorrow.*

Simply choose ANY 2 of the exciting books described on the other side—FREE. Then mail coupon and Moon-Tour Application at once!

Plus Any 2 OF THESE COMPLETE NEW SCIENCE-FICTION BOOKS FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP

THE Astounding SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY
Omnibus of SCIENCE
THE TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION CLASSICS
THE BEST FROM FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION
SNOW fury
19 ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SCIENCE FICTION and FANTASY
Beyond the Barriers

ROUND-TRIP MOON-TOUR APPLICATION

MOON-TOUR RESERVATIONS, Secretary
Science-Fiction Book Club

Please rush me 2 FREE Round-Trip-To-The-Moon Reservations.

My Reservations which will be printed on handy, wallet-size cards, will include a Moon weight chart and a complete Rocket-Ship Flight Schedule for the Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. I will in no way be committed to make a voyage.

IMPORTANT: This Application Will NOT Be Honored Unless Filled Out and Signed on the Reverse Side.

EXCITING SCIENCE-FICTION BEST-SELLERS— SEE OTHER SIDE OF COUPON TO GET TWO FREE!

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED